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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

SIR GEORGE BIDDLECOMBE, C.B.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

SIR GEORGE BIDDLECOMBE, C.B.

(RETIRED) CAPTAIN ROYAL NAVY

AUTHOR OF "ART OF RIGGING," "NAVAL TACTICS," "STEAM FLEET TACTICS," "CONCISE REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH CHANNEL," "CHANGES IN THE ROYAL NAVY DURING THE LAST HALF CENTURY" ETC. ETC.

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WITH A PORTRAIT AND OBITUARY NOTICE

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY
1878

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PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., LIMITED,
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Dedicated

WITH SINCERE REGARD AND ESTEEM TO

ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER MILNE, BART., G.C.B.

WITH WHOM I HAD THE HONOUR TO SERVE

WHEN HE WAS

FLAG-CAPTAIN IN HER MAJESTY'S SHIP "ST. VINCENT"

PREFACE.

THIS Work is prepared from notes during my long career; the object being to show that a limited education, if combined with energy, strength of will, and perseverance, may ultimately obtain a just reward.

GEO. BIDDLECOMBE.

68, GRANVILLE PARK, BLACKHEATH.
July, 1878.

NOTICE.

A PECULIAR and melancholy interest is attached to the appearance of this Work on account of the unexpected death of the Author on the eve of its publication. On Friday, the 19th July, Sir George Biddlecombe retired to rest, apparently in his usual good health. Next morning it was discovered that he had died during the night. He had risen, and putting on his dressing-gown, had walked round the bed to the mantelpiece for a match with which to light the gas. Whilst about to do so, he was seized with apoplexy, and, it would seem, death followed instantaneously; for the match-box was found in his hand, its contents scattered on the floor. Thus, in his seventy-first year, calmly passed away a veteran whose distinguished

services in many parts of the globe, and especially as Master of the Baltic Fleet, had made him a man of mark in his profession, and whose genial disposition endeared him to all who knew him.

193, PICCADILLY, W.,
August, 1878.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

SIR GEORGE BIDDLECOMBE, KT.C.B.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST VOYAGE IN THE *OCEAN* ROUND THE WORLD, 1823-4.

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As my life at sea commenced when I was fifteen, and with it any incidents that may chance to interest the general reader, it seems well to start my story at that point, merely premising that I first saw the light on Guy Fawkes' day, 1807, at Portsea, and completed my education at Dr. Neave's establishment in that town. In 1823, upon my father's return from Ceylon, it was finally resolved that the sea should be my profession, and in the same year I joined the ship *Ocean*, of Whitby, Captain William Harrison.

On the 17th of April we sailed from Spithead, bound for Sydney with convicts. At this distance of time, the events which make up the life on board ship would, if recorded, seem exceedingly trifling, and I must content myself with the relation of the more important incidents of my numerous voyages. It must suffice to say that I started my career on board the *Ocean* as a midshipman; but the post was a nominal one, as I found I was expected to do any work demanded of me. My earliest experiences were happy; for the first officer took a kindly interest in me, and, through his teaching, I soon became equal to the work aloft.

We had not been long at sea, when an event occurred of considerable importance; no less, indeed, than an attempt by the convicts to seize the ship. It is impossible to say what these desperate characters might have done, had it not been our good fortune to have timely warning. When near Trinidad, an anonymous letter was dropped through the cabin sky-light. It was addressed to the captain, and gave notice of the intended rising. The contents were at once communicated to the Surgeon Superintendent, Mr. McTernan, and to Lieut. Woodgate, 48th Regiment, commanding the troops; and it was also necessary to inform the officers of the watch,

because in these vessels a few of the convicts were allowed to assist the crew. But beyond this, no notice was openly taken of the matter.

The warning proved true; for at one o'clock in the morning the convicts in the watch let go the topsail sheets, halyards, and other ropes of importance, by which the ship was thrown into confusion; and, simultaneously, the prison doors were burst, and the sentries in the fore and main hatchways seized, whilst numbers of convicts appeared on deck. The situation would now have been desperate, had it not been for the timely and excellent precautions taken by the captain. The whole of the officers had taken their stand on the quarter-deck, and, armed with pistols, threatened to shoot the first man who should dare to place his foot upon it. Their admirable preparations and coolness entirely frustrated the plan of the rising; for the convicts, disheartened, had no remedy but to return to their prison, and so all danger was at an end.

The letter had pointed out the ringleaders by name; and these, five in number, were, as if on board a man-of-war, seized and punished. The chief of them was comparatively an old man, fifty-five years of age or thereabouts; nor was this the first occasion of his transportation. Also, as might be expected, the man who wrote the

letter did not escape suspicion, or the wrath of his disappointed fellows. They seized upon him, and though luckily rescued in time, he had to be kept apart from the rest for the remainder of the voyage. It may be well here to say that the unfortunate fellow had been a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, who, through a debauched life, had been led to commit the offence for which he was transported; and it is pleasing to know that his good conduct on this occasion enabled the Surgeon Superintendent to recommend him to the authorities, through whom he obtained a good situation.

On the 19th of August we, to our great joy, made the land of New Holland, and on the 23rd anchored in the magnificent harbour of Sydney. The town at that time consisted of one principal street of miles in length, from which others stretched up the hills, whilst at the upper part of the harbour, with a number of neat residences near it, was situate the Government House, then occupied by General Sir Thomas Brisbane.

We had now to get rid of our convicts. The usual official report, giving name, age, appearance, previous occupation and character of each convict, and stating the day of disembarkation, was posted in various parts of the town. When the morning came, the convicts' heads were shaved, and to each was given a suit of clothes marked

with the broad arrow. They were then landed under a guard, and detained on the wharf until householders had selected such as they required. The remainder were conducted to the barracks to be employed in road-making, &c. Each of these had a small shackle attached to the leg; whilst to the refractory a log of wood was added, and should they continue their malpractices, they were sent to the coal mines of Newcastle, or employed in clearing forests.

When we arrived, the aborigines of the country, the tribes of King Bungary, were gathered on the north shore of the harbour, and during our stay the king paid an official visit to the Governor. The dress of this primitive monarch was that of a general officer, but without the boots, which he had discarded as uncomfortable. He was accompanied by his wife and children. The latter were miserable objects, hardly a remove from the ourang-outang. They were dressed up in coloured rags, in this respect being better off than the greater number of their fellows, who were almost in a state of nudity. These tribes had no habitations; nothing but the forests to shelter them. The occasion of their presence was to obtain contributions from the Governor and people. Merchant-ships did not escape their importunity, often exchanging rum and biscuits for fish.

On Saturdays, the convicts were permitted to go to the commissariat department for their weekly supply of provisions; and on Sundays, after forenoon service, they were allowed a half-holiday. The latter privilege was granted somewhat at the expense of the general community; for, to avoid robberies on that day, no one was allowed to carry a parcel of any kind. A convict taken red-handed at this time set up an amusing defence. A Wesleyan minister had left his house for his chapel, which was near, without properly securing the door. The temptation proved too much for the convict, who, passing by and seeing the invitingly open door, entered and took away a clock. He had not proceeded far when he was stopped by the main-guard, and on the next morning taken before the magistrate on the charge of carrying a clock on a Sunday. I happened to be present on the occasion. These cases were disposed of summarily; and when the prisoner in his defence stated that, passing the house and seeing that the timepiece was not correct, he had merely taken it to put it right by the town clock, the sitting magistrate, Mr. Winkworth, very speedily sentenced him to the Emu Plains for twelve months.

We shipped a cargo of wool and other things for London. Before we left, the police were alert to discover any convict stowaways. One poor fellow,

in his anxiety to escape, even permitted the piece of iron used in picking the wool to enter his thigh; and it was only when it threatened his breast that he called out, and was dragged from his place of concealment.

On the 23rd of February, 1824, we sailed with a large number of passengers. On this voyage it was my fate to encounter a most terrific storm, amongst other vicissitudes of a sailor's life. We passed near the north end of New Zealand, in our course to Cape Horn, and when in lat. 62° 19′ S., long. 68° W., the gale came on us accompanied with a fearful sea. At 8 A.M., whilst scudding under a close-reefed maintopsail, the helmsman, who had just relieved the helm, negligently allowed the ship to broach to. The sea washed away the roundhouse or poop, all the upper works from the fore to the mizzen rigging, and also the launch with all the live-stock, and threw the cook-house into the lee fore-rigging, at the same time killing the cook's mate; and had it not been for the seaman-like qualities of our captain, it is likely that the ship would have foundered with all hands. As it was, there was three feet of water in the cabins betwixt decks, whilst the vessel leaked and laboured frightfully, and all on board were no little alarmed to be called to the pumps.

The gale fortunately abated, and in a few days

afterwards we descried a ship with the English ensign reversed as the signal of distress. We had hardly imagined that any vessel could be in a much worse state than our own; yet we found that this one was so, for when we closed and hailed, we learned she had leaked so much in the gale that the pumps could not keep the water down, and that now the hold was full of water, and the ship only kept afloat by the sperm oil which formed her cargo. She proved to be the *Arab*, Captain Sinclair, with about four hundred tons of oil, and had been four years away from England. Had we then possessed a knowledge of Berkeley's Sound, in the Falkland Islands, probably an attempt would have been made to take the vessel there, and thus save the cargo. But instead, it was resolved to abandon her, lest the gale should return, in which case it would have been impossible to rescue the crew. Our own boats having been washed away, the whale-boats of the *Arab* were used to bring away the men and their clothing. This was only effected with difficulty, one of the boats being stove in. Nor was the work rendered more easy by the fact that most of the whaler's crew were so stricken with scurvy that they had to be lifted on deck.

This addition of thirty-five men and four officers to our number placed us in that unpleasant pre-

dicament, occasionally the lot of sailors, a short allowance of water. We had no prospect of a fresh supply until reaching St. Helena, and before we reached the island our allowance was reduced to one quart for several days, and latterly to one pint, and on the day we made the land, the 12th of June, the very last allowance was issued. At all times, to make the land is pleasant; but how much more so must it be, when upon it depends the supply of this vital necessity. All eyes were open and every soul on board was overjoyed when the wished-for haven was made; for if by an error in reckoning we had passed the island, there was no other port to which we could have gone. But Captain Harrison was most attentive to lunar observations, and so hit off the spot exactly. Here, it will not be amiss to record my thanks to that skilful seaman for my own knowledge of navigation.

At St. Helena we of course visited Napoleon's tomb, and brought away, as was the custom, branches of the willows. Often as has been described the spot where lay the remains of the greatest of modern warriors, I cannot refrain from recording the deep impression the loveliness of the scene made upon me. At the bottom of a valley, with weeping willows above the flat stone, and close to it a bubbling fountain, of whose waters the Emperor used to drink, the situation is one of in-

finite repose. An iron railing surrounds the tomb, and there is nothing to indicate the earthly rank of one at whose word, when living, nations trembled. The new house, built for, but never occupied by, the Emperor, is prettily situated and well finished. The old house, which also we visited, was in a dismantled state and used as a barn.

At St. Helena we stayed to repair damages, and here many of the crew of the *Arab* left us, some finding employment on shore, others shipping in different vessels. On the island little except water is to be obtained, and we had to replenish our stores from passing vessels. On our way home we touched at the island of Flores,—a beautiful place, but at that time so destitute of resources that we only obtained a few bullocks, some onions, and rice. The latter had to take the place of bread or biscuit, of which we had none; but as we were scantily supplied with water, the substitute was seldom sufficiently boiled to be palatable. It may therefore be assumed that it was with much pleasure we sighted the Scilly Islands, and, having circumnavigated the globe, came to anchor in the Downs, in a country not only our own, but which afforded so ready a supply of all the necessaries we had long been without.

CHAPTER II.

CRUISE IN CHANNEL AND JOIN H.M.S. *BOADICEA* FOR EAST INDIES—ASSISTANT HARBOUR-MASTER AT CALCUTTA, 1824-5.

Nearly left behind—I narrowly escape being shot—In the Brazilian naval service for a few days—A good friend—Find my position unsatisfactory—Am appointed Assistant Harbour-master—Dislike to a shore life—Join H.E.I. Co.'s service—Lord Combermere.

ON leaving the *Ocean* I returned to my relatives, and was for a few months placed for tuition with the Rev. W. Maddox, of Devonport. Later in the year, that is, in November, 1824, I went for a cruise in the Channel on board H.M. cutter *Vigilant*. The commander, Lieut. Colthurst, was a friend of my father. My name did not, however, appear on the vessel's books.

In December, Sir James Brisbane, Kt.C.B., being appointed to H.M.S. *Boadicea*, as Commodore and Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies, was pleased to have my name entered on the ship's books as a boy, to do duty as master's assistant until a vacancy should occur. The *Boadicea* was

fitting out at Plymouth, from which we proceeded to Portsmouth to embark Lady Brisbane and her daughters.

Leaving Spithead on the 18th of February, 1825, we touched at Madeira. Here our stay was only for a few hours, and in consequence four of our officers were left behind. They were, however, singularly fortunate; for, embarking in the packet then lying in the harbour, they got to Oratavo, a town at the north-west part of Teneriffe, and so rejoined the ship at Santa Cruz. In making Teneriffe we sighted the peak when seventy-five miles off; it was then covered with snow. Santa Cruz is not extensive. It stretches along the beach, where there is a constant swell which, the mole notwithstanding, makes landing difficult. The mole itself, where Nelson lost his arm, and the cathedral, where is displayed as a trophy the union-jack taken on the occasion, naturally attracted our attention.

The most notable personal incident of this voyage was a narrow escape of my life; the event nearly proving fatal to the actor of it as to myself. Four of the officers were ordered, for misconduct, to mess in a screen berth in the steerage, the screen being close aft near the gun-room bulkhead. Inside the screen was the after clew of the officers' hammocks, mine amongst the rest. One

evening, about nine o'clock, shortly after leaving Teneriffe, I had gone to bed, when one of the four in disgrace, Mr. T——, a mate, discharged a pistol, no doubt with the intention to destroy himself. The ball passed through the flesh just behind the ear of the unfortunate man, and in its flight took a piece out of my head, before lodging in a beam. Luckily our surgeon was in the gun-room, and on hearing the report rushed out and stopped the discharge of pistol number two. I felt the blood running down my neck, but was more frightened than hurt, as it proved a mere flesh wound. The mate, however, who no doubt was not himself, was seriously injured; and, though cured by the surgeon, was afterwards subject to fits and delirium.

When on the 5th of April we reached Rio de Janeiro—that magnificent harbour, its mountains reaching the water's edge, surrounded with beautiful scenery, and large enough to float the navies of the world—the city was in a state of excitement. Lord Cochrane, then commanding the Brazilian fleet, was about to proceed to attack Pernambuco. I was offered a lieutenant's commission in the Imperial navy, which, on obtaining Commodore Brisbane's permission, I accepted. But afterwards, by his desire, I resigned it; and with reason enough, as it appeared—for a gentleman named Sewell, a lieutenant in the Brazilian navy, quitted

it to join the *Boadicea* as a seaman; preferring to sink his rank to continuance in a service so extremely lax in discipline.

At Madras, where, on account of the Burmese war, we landed Lady Brisbane and her daughters, I was hospitably entertained by Mr. King, a friend of my brother, and by Mr. Duncan, of the firm of Duncan and Wardale. Whilst staying with them, my rooms being in one of the bungalows in the grounds, I awoke one morning to find my portmanteau despoiled of everything of any value. The thief turned out to be one of the servants, a horsekeeper; for on an examination of his rooms some of my things were found, although the culprit himself escaped.

On the 4th of August we anchored in the Saugor Roads, about ninety miles below Calcutta. The Commodore and a number of the officers proceeded to the city, and I also obtained leave to do so. My position on board the *Boadicea* was not satisfactory —there had not been a vacancy for a master's assistant, as I had been led to expect. I therefore determined to try the East India service, and on my return to the ship in the Saugor Roads I applied to the Commodore for my discharge. This he was not only pleased to grant me, but added a letter to the Secretary of the Government at Calcutta, which proved of the utmost importance to

me; for on its delivery, Mr. Swinton (the Secretary) gave me a note to Commodore Sir. John Hayes, who at once appointed me Assistant Harbour-master, with a salary of ten rupees a day.

Here I might have remained, for my kind friend Mr. John Wilson, one of the principals of the Durrumtollah Academy (to whom I had a letter of introduction), insisted on receiving me in the Academy, so that I had plenty of friends and amusement. But the life was too idle to be to my liking, and after two months of it I solicited Sir John to get me appointed to a vessel going to the Burmese war, which he was pleased to do.

The only event of any note occurring during my short tenure of the office of Assistant Harbour-master, was an introduction to one of the great soldiers of the day. It was my duty to take an official letter on board the vessel which had just brought from England that most distinguished cavalry officer, his Excellency Lord Combermere, Commander-in-chief of the Forces in India. His lordship remarked that he had been cooped up on board ship for over four months, and suggested that I should take him for a walk. With this request I gladly complied, and we went ashore and walked through the avenue of trees from Calcutta to Fort William, when we returned on board.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND OFFICER OF H.E.I. CO.'S SHIPS *SUSAN* AND *GILMORE*, 1825-6.

I shoot a supposed enemy—An excited populace—Disagreeable consequences—Am attacked with fever—A deadly voyage—My case hopeless—The tables turned—A frightened elephant—I fight a duel—The war ended—The climate more deadly than war itself—Our ship reported lost—A great surprise—Pleasant hosts and sound advice.

THE appointment which Sir John Hayes procured me was that of second officer on board H.E.I. Co.'s ship *Susan*. We sailed from Calcutta with the brigadier, General Stuart, and native troops for Akyab, at the mouth of the river Arracan. At this place orders awaited us to proceed to Ramrie. On the passage inside the island of Cheduba we ran ashore, but the weather being fine and the water smooth, were afloat again in a few hours; and on the 9th of November, 1825, anchored at the mouth of the river, from which the brigadier at once proceeded to Ramrie, having ordered the troops to prepare to land the same day.

The landing of the men was the occasion of a

disagreeable incident to myself. The boats of the expedition were under my charge, and I headed them in the launch, with thirty men and their luggage. It was sunset when we entered the river, and the dense forest on either side caused the route to be very intricate. Suddenly the look-out gave the alarm that a war canoe was upon us; and sure enough a craft having all the appearance of a war canoe quickly closed with us. The troops had their muskets loaded, but I desired them not to fire until they received orders. Meantime, as no answer was given when we hailed, I took deliberate aim at the steersman and shot him, the ball passing through his right knee-cap and left thigh. Then, and only then, the crew called out that they were allies proceeding down the river to fish. That our suspicions had some justification, was made clear by the fact that the canoe was one captured from the enemy only a few days previously. It was now, however, manned by our allies the Mugs, and its occupants were so exasperated that they would hear no explanation, but turned round and returned with the wounded man to Ramrie.

At this place our troops were in cantonment; and it was a good thing for me that the brigadier had already landed. For the natives, on hearing of the occurrence, came in from miles around, and

with lighted torches awaited my arrival; and I cannot doubt that I would have been, not only seized, but in all probability assassinated, had not General Stuart sent a guard to the landing-place, by which I was conducted to his tent. The affair proved not only an unpleasant, but a costly one. I have only reason to congratulate myself that I behaved with the forbearance I did; for, had it not been for my order, the troops would have fired upon the canoe. Nevertheless, although the wounded man was sent to the hospital and everything done for him, his relatives preferred a charge against me for "having fired on him with intent to kill him, knowing him to be an ally." The case came before our Resident at Ramrie, Mr. Phillips, and he, when the inquiry had proceeded some length, advised me to make compensation to the relatives. This I did, paying them 240 rupees, or about £25 sterling; and thus ended this disagreeable episode, in which I had done no more or no less than my duty. It should, perhaps, be said that the man's leg was amputated and he recovered; but that shortly afterwards, when on a fishing expedition, he took the fever and died.

Having landed the troops, we proceeded to the river Arracan and sailed up it some fifty miles, anchoring at the spot where the transports were

lying. From this place I was sent in the launch to the city of Arracan, the chief place in the territory, in charge of four lacs of rupees, which we had brought from Calcutta for the payment of the troops. On our return to the ship I, as well as two of the boat's crew, had an attack of fever. At this time the havoc made by dysentery and cholera in the ranks was something fearful, sudden deaths being very frequent. Our next duty was to convey some of the invalids, two hundred and forty native troops under Major Elliott, to Chittagong, a port only two hundred and fifty miles distant, situate in the north-east part of the Bay of Bengal. But light and baffling winds made a long voyage of it, and it was eighteen days before we reached our destination, during which time eighty, or one-third, of the troops died.

In my own case, I must have been very near death's door. I owe my recovery, indeed, to the great care of Dr. Robinson, an old surgeon in the Company's service, who embarked in medical charge of the troops; and who, on hearing I was ill, immediately came to see me. I found my belief in the extreme danger of my condition on the fact that when the doctor came to see me, accompanied by the captain commanding the troops, the latter on leaving my cabin said to the doctor in my hearing: "It is not worth while

tormenting him, he cannot recover." The doctor did not reply to this, but prescribed for me; and strange to say, it was I who recovered, and the captain who died: for a few days afterwards he was himself attacked with dysentery, and succumbed to it on the day we arrived at Chittagong; the first day, in fact, on which I was sufficiently recovered to be able to walk on deck. This officer was a remarkably fine man. He was an habitual drinker of pale ale, managing, as a rule, his ten bottles a day; and it came about rather curiously that, as there was no plank aboard, the cases which had contained the ale were used to make his coffin.

On the last day of the year we landed our troops. Chittagong is situated some nine miles up the river, and during our stay there the climate was delightful. The cool mornings and the kindness of our Resident, Mr. Bartleman, soon restored me to health. At Chittagong many large coasting vessels were building, and supplies of all kinds were very abundant, poultry being especially very reasonable in price. The shooting in the neighbourhood was excellent. It was one of my recreations to ride out on an elephant. On one occasion, the animal took fright at a grey horse; singularly, because the horse was a stable companion. However, the mahout soon stopped the

runaway by piercing his head with a sharp iron. Elephants abound in the neighbourhood of Chittagong, and with a combination of starvation and thrashing, are very easily rendered docile.

In January, 1826, we made a second voyage to and from Arracan to Chittagong with invalid troops, and before leaving the latter place, I had an adventure endangering my life, which had its rise out of a very simple affair.

The shooting, as I have said, was excellent, and I had lent my gun to Mr. Pascoe, the third officer. On the following morning I contemplated a similar excursion, and on examining the weapon, which had been restored to its usual place in my cabin, I missed the worm from the ramrod. I naturally cross-examined my shipmate concerning it, whilst he vehemently asserted that he had duly replaced it. I retorted that this could not be, as no one had touched the gun since it had been replaced in my cabin. One word led to another, and in the end to a serious quarrel; so serious, indeed, that it had to be decided by a resort to arms. So trivial an affair would, in the present day, assuredly have ended in empty words; and it is difficult to imagine in the present feeling towards duelling (a practice chiefly confined to the innocuous and often ridiculous sword-combats in France) that we actually went ashore next morning to fight it out.

The result proved us both tolerable marksmen, and that we meant mischief: my antagonist's ball passing between my legs and severing the flesh in the lower part of the left thigh, whilst mine went through his right fore-arm. Here the affair luckily terminated; for we returned on board and were ever afterwards good friends. Mr. Pascoe's wound soon healed, but mine annoyed me for some time. I can only say, in excuse of my share in the business, that such was the practice of the age, nor could I with honour have declined the encounter.

From Chittagong we went to Akyab, at which place, on account of its healthiness, many troops were sent to recruit during the war. Thence we embarked the Bengal Grenadiers, Colonel Heathcott commanding, for Calcutta, where we landed them on the 14th of April. As the *Susan* was to be laid up for the time being, I joined in the same capacity H.E.I. Co.'s transport ship *Gilmore*.

In the *Gilmore* we embarked troops and stores for Rangoon, but were detained by strong gales for some weeks; and when after a boisterous passage we anchored off the town, we found Rangoon in the possession of the British; Abdullah, the chief of the Burmese army, having been captured and many stockades taken. Thus ended a war in which many seamen and troops had fallen victims to the

climate. We now re-embarked the troops and stores for Calcutta. We experienced a heavy gale from the south-west, in which some of the vessels in our company were seriously damaged, one indeed having to return to Rangoon; and when we reached Calcutta we found that our own ship, the *Gilmore*, was reported lost—had actually been seen bottom up in the Bay of Bengal. So absolute was the belief, that Mrs. Laws, the wife of the captain, had put on mourning for the supposed loss of her husband; and it is needless to say how great was the poor lady's delight to hear of our arrival all well.

With one more voyage my association with the *Gilmore* ceased. On this occasion we embarked artillery to relieve the force stationed at the lovely island of Penang. In our course we passed close to Barren Island, which at the time was vomiting smoke from its volcano. Calcutta was reached in the return voyage on November the 14th, when the *Gilmore* was laid up. I shall ever have a lively recollection of the attentions received from the officers of artillery stationed at Penang, and of the pleasant days spent in that land of spices. But I cannot better close this chapter than by expressing the pleasure it gave me to meet at Calcutta on my return my friends Messrs. King and Duncan from Madras. Both gentlemen were now established

in the city, and from both I met with unbounded hospitality; whilst from Mr. King I received advice which, I can with gratitude say, proved highly beneficial to me throughout my subsequent career.

CHAPTER IV.

CHIEF OFFICER BRIG *MARIA*, SHIP *FRANCES CHARLOTTE*, BARQUE *BELZONI*, 1827-8.

Learn my brother's death—The Isle of France—Happy slavery—A helpless crew—I change ships—Dutch hospitality—An effective ruse—An amorous Dutchman, but a good fellow.

IN December of the same year I joined, as chief officer, the brig *Maria*, and on the 9th of January, 1827, sailed in her for the Cape of Good Hope.

When nearing Ceylon the vessel sprung a leak, and we were obliged to put into Trincomalee. As I had heard that my brother Thomas had been appointed clerk to the store-keeper at the naval establishment at Trincomalee, I was naturally elated at the prospect of meeting him. But it proved to be a sorrowful visit. The news of his appointment was correct; but instead of finding him, I was destined to receive the news of his death. He, poor fellow! had been serving as clerk on board H.M.S. *Martin* at the Cape, and as she was ordered to the East Indies, he took his passage in her; but, to my great grief, the in-

formation awaited me that the vessel had been lost with all hands at the Seychelles in the great hurricane of 1826. In fact, when I arrived, the sale of his effects, sent from England to meet him, was about to take place; and I was only just in time to secure such of them as I did not wish to be sold, which included a watch and sextant sent out for myself.

On setting sail again, when off the Isle of France, we encountered a partial hurricane, which, though it did not last long, did us serious damage. On April 3rd we anchored in Table Bay. On shore I found our old passenger, Colonel Heathcott, who was here on account of his health. He showed me much hospitality. From the Cape we took a number of horses and mules for the Isle of France, where we arrived after a very fine passage. Mr. King had given me a letter of introduction to the Secretary of the Government, Mr. Kendal, which I now presented, and found of great service.

The Secretary's wife was a French lady; and the slaves employed as house-servants seemed positively to adore her. It was no wonder; for Mrs. Kendal's treatment of them was kindness itself. On one occasion, I remember, she left the table immediately on hearing of the illness of one of them, and not only gave practical advice, but saw that the sufferer had everything requisite done

for her. One of the results of my stay at the Mauritius was to convince me that the slave-population there was treated with more consideration than in any other of our colonies. And as a sequel the slaves themselves are not unhappy, and become firmly attached to the families in which they live.

From the Mauritius we went to Madras, and thence to Escapelley, a roadstead on that coast, where we loaded a cargo of salt for Calcutta. On this voyage we ran through the Maldive Islands, with their curious protecting walls of coral. At Calcutta, I joined as chief officer the ship *Frances Charlotte*. We sailed on the 1st September, but made poor headway, for the monsoon was against us. About fifty miles from Vizagapatam, we fell in with a brig disabled by loss of rudder and lower masts. I was sent to board her, and found she was laden with salt for Calcutta, and quite unmanageable. She was manned with East Indians, sixteen persons in all, was entirely run out of water, and only one boat on deck. There was no remedy, therefore, but to do what we could for the unfortunate fellows. I resolved at once to cut away the berthing sufficiently to launch the boat, and then took the crew, with the little food they had, on board our ship. We were to some extent rewarded by the sincerity of

their unbounded expressions of gratitude, when, on arrival off Vizagapatam, we put the unfortunate fellows in their boat, with provision and water, to land.

Touching at Madras, we there embarked two passengers who had been travelling in the South-Sea Islands and China—the Rev. Mr. Tyerman and Mr. Bennett. We took them with us to the Mauritius; and I have a sensible recollection of this pleasant passage, which owed much of its agreeableness to the enlivening company of these two gentlemen.

On our arrival we found another of our owner Mr. Dunbar's vessels, the barque *Belzoni*. It was decided that one of the two should return to England, and the other proceed to India. The selection for home fell on the *Belzoni;* and, as I had now been absent for some years and was anxious to see my native land again, I proposed to the chief officer of that vessel that we should effect an exchange. Fortunately this was arranged; and on the 13th of December I sailed, as first officer, in the *Belzoni*, Captain Andrew Talbert, for London *viâ* Amsterdam. On this voyage we touched at the Cape. Ours was the first English vessel to pass through the newly opened canal at Amsterdam. On this occasion our band played in the evening, and we were received with considerable

enthusiasm by the people. At Amsterdam we discharged our cargo, and after a brief stay, made pleasant by our experience of the well-known hospitality of the Dutch, we sailed for our destination, arriving safely in the West India Docks on the 17th of April, 1828.

The phlegm of the Dutchman is proverbial. Yet this passage has ever been a notable one to me, by reason of the presence of a Mynheer who displayed the possession not only of sentiment, but of extreme liveliness.

Amongst the passengers who came on board at the Cape of Good Hope was a young Dutch gentleman, who soon became universally known in the ship as "Joe." It appeared that he had formed some disreputable attachment, and his father had determined to ship him off against his will; in other words, to kidnap him on board. The matter was carried through in this way. By previous arrangement, our band played early in the morning, at a time when Joe was to be invited by an elder brother to take a stroll on the beach. Of course the ravishing strains coming across the water were very attractive, and the brother's suggestion that they should take a boat and row off to the ship was readily fallen in with. On their arrival alongside they were invited on board, the invitation being supplemented with the announce-

ment that breakfast was waiting. Our young gentlemen, of course, did not hesitate; and after a pleasant meal, Master Joe was kept engaged in conversation until the capture was complete. It is more easy to imagine than describe his astonishment when told, first, that his brother had gone ashore; secondly, that his clothes and necessaries for the voyage were aboard; and finally, that he could not be permitted to return.

He kicked against the arrangement at first, as was natural; but when he found that he was doomed, he, like the good fellow he proved to be, soon settled down and enjoyed himself immensely; and not only made the passage pleasant for himself, but contributed, as has been said, to the general mirth.

On making the Texel, the quarantine boat boarded us; but our passenger very soon set the question of pratique at rest. "You want a clean bill of health," said Joe in Dutch, at the same time pointing to me. "This is our chief officer—a picture of it." The good-humour of the speech quite satisfied our visitor, who at once admitted us.

At Amsterdam itself, Joe was not entirely fortunate. He imagined himself to be very shrewd; and though both the captain and myself had warned him against thieves generally and Jews in particular, he fell amongst them. Confident in his

own astuteness, and armed with his letters of introduction, he took a laughing leave of us, to return the very first day minus his watch and all his money, with a Jew for his companion, and both of them the worse for liquor. The new-comer was extremely anxious to prove to me that he was a particular friend of Joe's, and that in consequence it would be very desirable that he should be allowed to take Joe's goods and chattels ashore for him. When I abruptly refused, my gentleman assumed a dictatorial tone. But he did not gain much by it. I ordered two seamen to put him over the ship's side, with distinct instructions that they were not to *hurt* him. They followed the order to the letter. They simply put a rope under his arms and dropped him quietly into the sea; and when fairly submerged, hauled him up again, and again lowered him; but this time to deposit him in his own boat. He was not many seconds in starting for shore, and the *Belzoni* never saw him again.

At Amsterdam we parted with our passenger with much regret. But absence had not robbed him of sentiment, nor conquered his passion. When I parted with him he still vowed his determination to return to the Cape on the first opportunity; but of the sequel I am, of course, unable to speak.

CHAPTER V.

SECOND OFFICER OF H.E.I. CO.'S SHIP *SUSAN*, TWO VOYAGES TO INDIA, 1828-31.

Detained as a witness—Pass as Second Master in the Royal Navy—Through the breakers—Burial at sea; extraordinary incident—Men overboard—Determine to join the Royal Navy.

It had been my intention to ship again in the *Belzoni*, but a very disagreeable duty prevented me.

We were safely docked, and I was just preparing to start for home, having obtained leave, when a messenger arrived at my lodgings announcing that a robbery had been committed on board the ship. I at once hurried down and found that some cases of wine had been rifled by the master of a lighter and some of his men—the former, indeed, being caught red-handed with a bottle of liquor on his person. It proved a costly indulgence to them, for they were handed over to the Thames police, and in due course put upon their trial, when the master was sentenced to transportation, and the men to different terms of imprisonment.

I was subpœnaed as a witness, and had to stay.

As the trial only took place after the *Belzoni* sailed, I was obliged to look out for another berth. I was, however, extremely fortunate in meeting with Admiral Sir Henry Blackwood, Bart., a sincere friend of my father, who strongly advised me to pass my examination as Second Master in the Royal Navy, and supplemented this advice by the practical service of obtaining the necessary order for my examination. This took place in May, 1828, on board H.M.S. *Victory*, the examining officer being Sir Michael Seymour, Bart., then in command of the yacht *Royal George*.

This prudent step did not prove of immediate service, for at the time there were so very few ships in commission, that my application for an appointment was not successful. As, however, to idle could not be thought of, I determined once more to join the mercantile service. And here my old connection with H.M.S. *Boadicea* served me. Commander Grote, R.N., a lieutenant of that ship at the time I was in her, gave me an introduction which gained me the appointment of second officer in H.E.I. Co.'s ship *Susan*, Captain Holiday. The chief officer's berth had unfortunately already been filled.

We sailed with troops for Calcutta on the 29th of June. A gale detained us in the Channel some three weeks, and light winds succeeding, made the

passage long and tedious. Running short of water, we made for the Nicobar Island, where we rafted a good supply, and got some pigs and poultry; but found the natives very treacherous. The voyage out consumed over six months. On our return with cargo we touched at Vizigapatam, and thence proceeded to Narzipore, an open anchorage (Lat. 16° 11′ N.), a place little known except to coasting vessels. The town is some distance from the roads. Finding shoal water we brought up in seven fathoms, and the next proceeding was to discover an entrance across the bar of the river. This was my duty.

There was a fresh breeze, so we made sail on the boat; but when we had run some six miles, found that we had got amongst the breakers on the bar. The position was very critical. It was too late to go back. The surf ran so high, that to have shortened sail would almost certainly have caused the loss of the boat with all hands. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to go ahead. Fortunately, by keeping the sail set, we managed to keep just ahead of the surf, and so got through. On returning with a pilot through the regular channel, we saw the place we had passed over. At this spot the surf beat on the bar to the height of fifteen feet at least, showing clearly that our escape had been little short of a miracle.

From Narzipore we proceeded to Madras, and there embarked the Company's invalids for England, arriving in the East India Docks, after a fine passage, on the 5th of September. I had now some time at home, as we did not fit out again until the May of the following year (1830), embarking part of the 75th Regiment, which we took to the Cape on our way to India. After landing them, we received on board part of the 55th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Nicholson commanding, and with them proceeded to Madras; a passage made memorable by the extremely pleasant companionship of the officers. From Madras we took a portion of the 26th Regiment to Calcutta, arriving at the latter place in November; and there shipped cargo and embarked part of the 14th Regiment, under Major Turner, who was accompanied by his wife, and some other passengers for London.

Amongst the latter was one of the Board of Trade, accompanied by his wife. The poor lady became seriously ill, and died within a week of our departure, and at her funeral a remarkable occurrence took place. The chief officer had been very particular to see that the coffin had been perforated with holes as usual; but it had subsequently been lined with silk, and possibly, in consequence of the water not penetrating the latter, the unpleasantness occurred. It was placed, as is customary, on

a stage erected at the ship's side near the gangway, during the reading of the burial service, and duly weighted with shot. But when at the exact moment it was committed to the deep, instead of sinking out of sight it stood erect, partially out of the water. The weather was calm, and immediate measures were taken to remedy the mistake. I was sent to sink it, and did so by attaching more shot. But the horror of the relatives during the intervening time was necessarily very extreme.

On this voyage, out and home, we were more than usually unlucky in the loss of men overboard. Going out, a man fell overboard in the night, and was never seen. During the bathing, which was permitted in calm weather or light winds, a soldier seeing a comrade swimming about, thought he would try the same, and overboard he went. It nearly proved his last jump. As luck would have it, it happened to be my watch; and catching sight of the man, and seeing that he was really drowning, I jumped overboard and succeeded in rescuing him. He was already some four feet under the surface when I reached him. Both he and his comrades heartily thanked me. In the passage home we had the misfortune to lose a midshipman, Mr. Holt. He was in my watch, and an excellent officer. It was usual in light winds to allow the midshipman of the watch to

manœuvre the ship; and on this occasion, at 9 o'clock in the evening, speed two knots, he was tacking the ship, and went aft to look at the ship's wake, when he overbalanced himself. The poor lad was never seen to rise. He was a great loss to us; and I can well believe that the dreadful news must have been a terrible grief to his family. His father was a physician in London.

We arrived in the East India Docks on the 14th June, 1831, and soon afterwards I left the ship, determined to enter the Royal Navy, and was encouraged and assisted in my resolve by Sir Henry Blackwood. The Navy Board required me to pass an examination for Second Master at the Trinity House, which I did satisfactorily on June 30th.

The following is a copy of the letter shortly afterwards received from my late captain :—

"LONDON, *Nov. 13th*, 1831.

"SIR,

"As I am about leaving town for a short period, and it is probable you may get some eligible appointment in the interim, I take this opportunity of expressing my sentiments to you (as a recommendation from an old commander may sometimes be of infinite utility), and beg to say during the two voyages you sailed as second officer in the E.I. Co.'s chartered ship *Susan*, under my command, I beg to return you my sincere thanks for

your zealous conduct on all occasions, for the benefit of me and the interest of the ship, as well as for your gentlemanly and seamanlike conduct, combined with sobriety and attention, during that period; and I trust that you may continue to merit the same encomiums from your future commanding officer.

"I trust the service you are about to enter will ultimately prove more beneficial than the one you are now quitting.

"I remain yours sincerely,

"GEORGE HOLIDAY,

"Commander H.E.I. Co.'s ship *Susan.*"

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND MASTER H.M. SURVEYING VESSEL *ÆTNA*, COAST OF AFRICA, PORTUGAL, AND MEDITERRANEAN, 1831-33.

A ship with a bad name—Hard work kills no man—Driven out to sea on short allowance—A wrong signal—Shotted guns; a vehement recall—In the Douro—A dangerous service—Safely out, in spite of batteries and breakers—Miguelites and Pedroites—A bloody encounter—Narrowly escape a messenger of death—The *Ætna* changes commanders—An ill-starred voyage—The cisterns at Carthage—I suggest an improvement in naval tanks.

ON the 18th November, 1831, I was appointed Second Master of H.M. Surveying-vessel *Ætna*, Commander Edward Belcher. The vessel had not a good reputation for the comfort of her officers. She had only recently returned to refit, and there had been several courts-martial. Before joining the vessel in the morning, I was most hospitably and kindly entertained by Captain the Hon. Price Blackwood, and the Hon. Mrs. Blackwood, the present Lord Dufferin's mother. Captain Blackwood was fitting out H.M.S. *Imogene* at Portsmouth.

We sailed on the 28th November, touching at

Santa Cruz, where we rated the chronometers, and at the French settlement of Goree, and reached the Gambia River on the West Coast of Africa, anchoring off Bathurst.

Here we were engaged in fitting out the surveying boats, and when all was ready proceeded, in company with H.M. cutter *Raven*, Lieutenant Arlett and two barges, to the surveying ground. We first explored the river Componi, which we named Graham's River. The work of surveying was extremely heavy. Every day we had breakfasted and left the ship by four in the morning, ceasing work only at sunset. And as the completion of the day's labour would often find us miles from the ship, it was not unfrequently 11 P.M. before we got on board again. Sunday was no exception, and on one occasion the hammocks were not down for the night. As a proof that hard work will kill no man, it may be said that although we continued surveying up to the 9th of June in a deadly climate, only one man died. Later, however, and especially amongst the officers, there was a great deal of ophthalmia and dysentery; no doubt arising from the exposure. From the first-named complaint I myself suffered severely.

During this time I was severely injured whilst clearing the hold; but I returned to duty shortly afterwards, and then was, in consequence of the

illness of another officer, ordered on detached service, to take charge of the second barge, a cutter being attached for sounding. On May 31st I had instructions to go with the cutter to pick up a beacon-buoy, about eight miles distant to leeward. We had only just secured the buoy when it came on to blow, with a heavy sea, against which we were powerless to make headway. We were ultimately driven out of sight of both land and vessels. Drenched to the skin and without either food or water, we had a rough night of it, and were not sorry when with daylight the gale moderated and we were able to make sail, beating to windward. About noon we descried the masts of the *Ætna*, and shortly afterwards, nearer to us, made out the first barge at anchor.

As we had been now thirty-six hours without anything either to eat or drink, I had no hesitation in ordering the men to pull for the barge. When we got alongside, I observed a signal made on board the *Ætna;* but as it had no reference to us, I took no further notice of it. After getting the refreshment we wanted, we worked to windward towards our own barge, and in so doing passed at some little distance from the *Ætna.* I was very considerably surprised when Commander Belcher opened fire on us from the *Ætna* with blank guns, following them up with shotted ones,

twenty-two in number, some of the shots passing unpleasantly close. Then, and then only, the first lieutenant, Mr. Mitchell, detected the mistake which had brought this reprimand upon us. The signal made by the *Ætna* was intended to be my recall, but the signalman had in error hoisted that of another boat.

The following letter received many years subsequently from Admiral Kellett, the Arctic voyager, then serving in the *Ætna* as second lieutenant, refers to the incident:—

"CLONACODY, PETHARD, TIPPERARY,
28th June, 1862.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I am truly obliged to you for your very kind congratulations. It is a long time to look back on when you and I were serving in the Bijouga Channels. Do you recollect Belcher saluting you there. What a life of toil you have spent in the service! but all your appointments have been complimentary to your abilities; and you are lucky to be employed, for I assure you, after a life of active service, it is terrible to have nothing to do.

"Again thanking you for your kind congratulations,

"I remain yours sincerely,

"HENRY KELLETT."

On the 3rd of June I was relieved from the charge of the barge on account of the attack of ophthalmia to which I have referred; and a few days later, the survey being completed, we left the surveying ground on our return route to Teneriffe. Here the change of climate and fresh provisions soon set us all up; and we proceeded with the survey of the Bay of Santa Cruz, and thence round to the west side, where we cruized off Oratavo, to measure the height of the Peak. From Teneriffe we proceeded to Gibraltar to refit, and thence sailed for Oporto, being towed over the bar into the river Douro, on October 21st.

Our employment at Oporto was to survey the entrance of the river, and also occasionally to bring the mails in the bar-boat. The latter was a service of considerable danger; not only on account of the heavy surf, but because the Miguelite batteries would occasionally amuse themselves by firing at us, the shots passing too close to be always pleasant.

Whilst in the Douro, a fine steam vessel, *The London Merchant*, with the Marquis Palmella, carrying dispatches to England, on board, was detained. For not only was the bar almost impassable, but the Miguelite batteries were prepared to sink her, if she made the attempt to cross it. They were very bitter against the unfortunate

Marquis, and had put a heavy price on his head. The pilots absolutely refused, on account of the danger, to make the attempt; and in these circumstances the Portuguese Government solicited our Commander to allow his officers to take the vessel to sea.

For this perilous and troublesome work, Lieutenant Ledgard volunteered, selecting me to accompany him in charge of the boat with the hawsers. On the 22nd of November, at 1 o'clock A.M., having first swung the vessel to the tide, we made a start. The night was pitch-dark, and our first proceeding was to run ashore on the Capadillo Sand, at the entrance. However, I took a hawser on shore from the vessel and secured it, by which means we hove her off. The channel here is only one hundred and eighty yards wide; nevertheless by means of temporary lights on the land we managed to steam her over the bar. Here, it seemed as if our labour was to be fruitless, for a heavy sea breaking on board just as we were on the bar, filled the engine-room. Fortunately, the crew worked the pumps with a will, and the vessel was got safely to sea; very much to the astonishment of the pilots, when next morning they found that on so dark a night, and with hostile batteries not two hundred yards distant, the passage had been effected.

During our stay in the Douro, we were often

witnesses of engagements between the opposing forces, Miguelites and Pedroites. On the 17th of December, a most sanguinary affair took place quite close to the ship. The Pedroites had in view to take possession of some wine in a convent on the south side of the river, near to which, encamped on the hills, were some three thousand Miguelites. About one thousand caçadores (Pedroites) crossed over at 8 A.M., and effected a landing in admirable order, forming in three detachments. The centre advanced towards a small outpost of the Miguelites, whilst detachment number two succeeded in reaching the convent and securing some seventy pipes of wine, which were conveyed safely across the river to Oporto. But now came a terrible retribution. The Miguelites advanced in force, and the others made for the boats. When some of the retreating forces getting into their boats shoved off from the shore, they found that, as the oars had been permitted to go adrift, they were helplessly floated down stream within shot of the enemy. Others, in their terror, crowded the boats to such an extent that they grounded. Upon them in their helplessness the Miguelites opened from the beach a most destructive fire. The carnage was dreadful to behold. The poor fellows were almost annihilated. Certainly, not more than three hundred escaped; and when the tide ebbed,

the beach was literally strewed with dead bodies. It was a shocking affair altogether.

Although our mission was peaceful, we did not escape all danger. A large quantity of our rigging was cut to pieces by the fire on this occasion; and whilst we were repairing it we had some narrow escapes. A shot passed between the legs of Lieutenant Mitchell, cutting a piece from his trousers, scratching his thigh; and another passed through my cap whilst I was busy on the forecastle. This shot lodged in the foremast, and as I had some reverence for what had so narrowly missed being, to me, the messenger of death, I extracted it, and still have it in my possession.

We ultimately left the Douro on the 6th April, 1833, and after a short time spent in the survey of the coast of Portugal, proceeded to Palermo for observations, and thence to survey the Keith and Shirki shoals. During this survey we touched amongst other places at Tunis and Galita. When our work was completed we sailed along the south shore of the Mediterranean, and stood into the Bay of Algiers; from which place we started for home, and, on our arrival at Spithead, were ordered into Portsmouth Harbour to refit.

In concluding the account of my connection with the *Ætna* I should name that whilst we were at Tunis, the Consul-General, Sir Thomas Read,

arranged a trip for us to the ruins of Carthage. It was altogether a most interesting place. The walls in places were quite twenty feet thick. The celebrated underground cisterns or tanks, the remains of the Tyrian city, twenty-four in number, I found to be one hundred and eighty feet long, and about half as wide, all of solid masonry, and two-thirds of them in a complete state of preservation, notwithstanding the centuries that have elapsed since their construction. The aqueduct connecting these tanks with the city of Tunis is covered over, and may be traversed on horseback. It was, however, a dangerous expedition, on account of the holes, which were so many traps for the horses' feet.

Just at the end of this voyage the new Admiralty orders altering the Regulations of Precedence, and placing mates senior to second masters, came into force. In consequence I handed over my watch to my messmate Collinson (then a mate, now Admiral Sir Richard Collinson). Far from regretting the change, it was positively a pleasure to be rid of the charge. It was quite impossible to satisfy Commander Belcher in any way. When we started from Portsmouth we had not expected a comfortable voyage, and the result proved our apprehensions were too well grounded; for, on our arrival, the numerous complaints of the officers of their treatment by Commander Belcher, induced the Admi-

ralty to pay the ship off. I, perhaps, should least complain; for I obtained not simply the usual certificate, but the following additional testimonial, as much to the point as it is laconic:—

"I can recommend Mr. Biddlecombe as a steady, zealous officer.

"(Signed) EDWARD BELCHER."

All the officers were re-appointed, and the ship commissioned the next day for Commander Skyling. But as my constitution had suffered so severely from the effects of the climate of the West Coast, I applied to be superseded; the day after which the unfortunate *Ætna* sailed once more for the Coast. Nothing could well have been more ill-starred than this subsequent voyage: three men had been killed whilst fitting out; immediately on their arrival on the Coast, Commander Skyling and a boat's crew were murdered at Cape Ross; and, to cap all, one lieutenant, several midshipmen, the boatswain, and many of the crew died from the effects of the climate.

It was whilst I was at home in 1833 that I submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a plan to alter the water-tanks in use in the Navy, so as to prevent dirt getting into them. At

first, it seemed the proposal would be successful; for I received the following letter:—

"ADMIRALTY, *24th January*, 1834.

SIR,

"I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that the Admiral at Portsmouth has been directed to cause a tank, fitted on your principle, to be examined and reported on.

"(Signed) JOHN BARROW.

"Mr. G. Biddlecombe."

The trial was made on the 25th of January, in the presence of the Admiral Superintendent, Sir Frederick Maitland, and the principal officers, who reported as follows: "That the plan is an improvement, insomuch that it will prevent the necessity of ever taking off the lid except for cleaning out the tank, thereby preventing the waste of water when the ship is rolling, and also lessen the chance of dirt falling in."

The recommendation was not carried out; for in a subsequent letter from the Secretary to the Admiralty I was informed that "their lordships do not think fit to incur the expense of the alteration in the tanks, as suggested by you."

Although not successful, this proved to be the forerunner of other suggestions for the improvement of naval economy on my part.

CHAPTER VII.

SECOND MASTER H.M.S. *BLONDE*, WEST INDIES, SOUTH AMERICA, AND PACIFIC, 1833-5.

Pass as Master R.N.—The Marquess of Sligo—Again meet Admiral Sir M. Seymour, Bt.—A seaman's foreboding of death singularly verified—Lord Byron's seal—An adventure with banditti at Lima—One of us stripped barefoot—Unexpectedly let off—My favourite sword—Sent in charge of the *Carmen* to wreck of H.M.S. *Challenger*—Helplessness of a Chilian crew in danger—British resolution—Nearly lost—Hear of my promotion.

WHEN I applied to be superseded in the *Ætna*, I was immediately appointed as second master, on November 8th, to H.M.S. *Blonde*, Commodore Francis Mason, C.B., then fitting for the Pacific. There being no master appointed to the ship at the time, it devolved upon me to fit her out. I went up to Trinity House and passed my examination as master of a sloop of war; and then the Commodore solicited my appointment to the higher rank in the *Blonde*. But, unfortunately, as my examination had not passed me for this class of vessel, the application was not acceded to.

At Spithead we embarked the Marquess of Sligo

and family, and sailed, on the 15th of February, 1834, for Jamaica. Amongst the cadets who joined us on this voyage was the son of Colonel Horace Seymour. The colonel brought him on board at Spithead, and the youngster was handed over to my care as senior officer of the gun-room mess. The lad (the present Vice-Admiral Sir Frederic B. P. Seymour, K.C.B.) was a jolly, light-hearted fellow, and much liked by his messmates, and a great favourite. My care of him has since been more than repaid by many kindnesses. Touching at Madeira, Barbadoes, and Martinique, we anchored in Port Royal on the 4th of April, after a most pleasant passage, rendered doubly agreeable by the kindness exhibited by our illustrious passengers. No family could ever have carried away with them the good wishes of the officers of the ship more sincerely than did that of the Marquess and Marchioness on this occasion. Indeed, when the Marquess landed, the day after our arrival, the junior officers wished to pull him on shore, but he would not permit it.

From Jamaica we proceeded, after touching at the island of St. Jago, to Rio de Janeiro. There I had the melancholy pleasure of dining, on shore, with Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Bt., the Commander-in-chief. It was a very great pleasure to receive an invitation from him, not only on

account of his kindness, but because he had been my passing captain in 1828 for second master. It was a grief because I found him very ill; and indeed the gallant officer only survived a few days after we had sailed (on June 25th) for the Pacific.

When we reached Berkeley Sound, in the Falkland Islands, we took on board the two murderers of the late British Resident (Mr. Brisbane). They were true types of the renegade South American, and as thorough-paced scoundrels in looks as one could wish to see. Here one of our petty officers, Edmonds by name, died in a very extraordinary way. He had been many years at sea, and had travelled as confidential servant to Lord Byron. The Governor of the islands (Lieutenant Smyth, R.N.) was allowed a boat's crew; and when one of these wished to give up his place, Edmonds applied to me to get him substituted, alleging that he wished to end his days in the Falkland Islands. I looked upon it merely as a whim; but nevertheless used my influence with the first lieutenant, Lydiard, and got him the desired permission. Later, when the hands were turned up after dinner to furl sail, Edmonds went to his station on the main-yard, and, missing his hold, fell into the main-chains. The poor fellow was so injured that he died in a few hours; and thus it came about that by accident his wish or forebod-

ing was fulfilled, and he was buried in the place he had himself designated. He possessed a seal given to him by Lord Byron; and when he learned that I had obtained for him the exchange he desired, he, out of gratitude, offered it to me, as the greatest treasure he had. I, of course, under such circumstances declined to take it from him; although subsequently, at the sale of his effects, I gladly became the possessor of it.

After a very fine passage we reached Valparaiso on the 6th of August, and thence proceeded to Callao. At the time of our arrival at the latter port, the country was infested by banditti (the Montaneros). On one Sunday, Abdul Kerim, Curtis, Fitzgerald, and myself, the three being my messmates and the former, as his name would indicate, an Egyptian, started on horseback for Lima. We safely reached the city, which is built in the true Spanish style, the streets at right angles and the churches, by their magnificence, dwarfing all other buildings. We left Lima before dark and had just passed the half-way house on our return, when a number of banditti rode out upon us from the forest.

I happened to be nearest, and my horse, thoroughly frightened at the sudden appearance, reared on end and fell back upon me, fortunately without doing me any serious injury. Curtis,

good-naturedly, jumped off to assist me. The incident proved a lucky one for us, because the banditti, concluding, it may be supposed, that we were disabled, made after the other two. The Egyptian put spurs to his horse and galloped ahead; but Fitzgerald they managed to drive into the forest. Curtis and myself had by this time remounted, knowing nothing of what had occurred to the others. We proceeded on the road towards Callao, expecting each moment to come upon either our messmates or the robbers; but saw nothing of either, until safe at our destination, where we found Abdul Kerim awaiting us.

As nothing could be heard of Fitzgerald, it became necessary to return to search for him. On applying to the Governor to furnish us with an escort for the purpose, he excused himself on the plea that he had no troops or police at his disposal. The foreign residents, however, showed themselves to be of different stuff. Hearing of this exhibition of callousness or pusillanimity, several of them volunteered to accompany Curtis and myself, when we started. But it was not until we got to the gates of Lima that, to our delight, we found Fitzgerald. He was barefoot, and in this plight had had to walk from the place where the attack had been made to Lima, about three miles. For it appeared that the ruffians had taken him into the forest

and robbed him of everything he possessed, his sword being lost in the scuffle. They had not, however, otherwise injured him. We went back to the forest and found the sword; and on our return on board, were next morning brought before the Commodore. Our trepidation was considerable; but instead of giving us a severe punishment, he simply and very quietly said that he hoped all who were found riding on a Sunday would be treated in the same fashion.

The recovery of the sword had a particular interest for me. On my promotion, a short time subsequently, Fitzgerald presented it to me. I hold it in high estimation and always wear it; and my regard for it is not lessened by the fact that the donor, poor fellow! was killed at the capture of Canton.

When we again reached Valparaiso, after touching at numerous ports on the coast, we learned that H.M.S. *Challenger*, Captain M. Seymour, was wrecked off Turcapel Head. In company with H.M.S. *Beagle*, Captain Fitzroy, who had just surveyed the coast, we at once proceeded to Conception. Arrived there, the Commodore hired the Chilian schooner *Carmen* for the purpose of proceeding to the wreck.

Of this expedition I was sent in charge, having with me Mr. Usborne, master's assistant, and three

petty officers to assist the Chilian crew, besides Captain Fitzroy's coxswain with a whale-boat. We started on the 24th of June, Captain Fitzroy himself proceeding by land, for the purpose of signalling us as to the exact position of the encampment of the shipwrecked crew, the position of the wreck being only vaguely known. On the afternoon of the second day we had the satisfaction, when near the river Lebo, to see the union-jack flying, and immediately made all sail. But an unexpected catastrophe utterly disabled us from carrying out our object. When bending a topsail which had been split in the morning, but repaired, and just as our four men were coming off the yard, the schooner gave a pitch that carried away the foremast below the foreyard, whilst the wreck carried the mainmast with it close down to the deck by the triatic-stay. The four men fell from aloft, one inboard, the others overboard; but fortunately not only for themselves, but for all, as the sequel proved, they were saved and no one of them seriously injured.

The rigging was secured, but the spars had to be cut away, lest they should injure the ship's bottom, for she was rolling heavily. We succeeded in jury-rigging the stump of the foremast, and triced the gaff of the foresail up against it, hauling the sheet aft, which steadied the vessel

materially, and with the help of a boat's lug-sail on the quarter, assisted to keep her bow to the sea. But it was a very anxious night, for we were close to the reef of the Island of Mocha. As day dawned, it blew exceedingly hard, but fortunately veered to the northward, which enabled us to put our head off shore. The gale, however, held out for several days; and during it, owing to the fact that I had neither a bed nor a dry place in which to lie, I quite lost the use of my legs. Now we had reason to be glad that our men had escaped uninjured, as well as an example of the pluck and endurance of the British seaman. In our perilous condition, the Chilian crew lost all heart, refused to work, and gave themselves up for lost. And I am perfectly convinced that had it not been for the exertions and untiring endurance of Mr. Usborne, assisted by the willing help of our four volunteer seamen, nothing could have saved the vessel.

When the weather at last moderated, we rigged jurymasts and proceeded towards Conception, and by good luck on the passage met our own ship the *Blonde*. It appeared she had done our work; for she had been to the river Lebo piloted by Captain Fitzroy, and now had the shipwrecked crew on board. We were taken in tow, and so soon as we were anchored, I was taken on

board the *Blonde*, in which vessel I received so much kindness from everybody that I was soon on my legs again. I proceeded in the *Blonde* to Valparaiso, and thence we sailed to Callao. On our arrival at the latter place, I heard indirectly of my promotion, on the 11th of April, 1835, to the rank of Master, which was confirmed a few days later on the arrival of H.M.S. *North Star*. On our return to Valparaiso I was relieved by my successor and ordered to take passage to England in H.M.S. *Satellite*, Commodore Robert Smart, K.H.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUPERNUMERARY MASTER H.M.S. *SATELLITE* AND SLAVER *ORION*—MASTER H.M.S. *ACTÆON*, SOUTH AMERICA AND PACIFIC, 1835-8.

Capture a slaver—Volunteer as master—Appointed to the *Actæon*—Resolution Bay—Influence of missionaries—Honolulu—Otaheite—A double Christmas—Queen Pomaré—Discover three islands—I trace and name them—Pitcairn's Island—A renegade ruler—Short shrift—A deserted boat's crew—On horseback in Chili—A romance of New Grenada—A Spanish tyrant—A woman's heroism—Enticing hospitality—The day of reckoning—Firm in spite of threats and promises—*Viva la Patria!*

I LEFT Valparaiso in the *Satellite* on the 30th of October, 1835, and had a delightful passage round the Horn as far as Rio de Janeiro. A few days after leaving the latter port, when in lat. 20° 32′, we fell in with and captured the slaver *Orion*, a brig, at the time fully laden with its miserable freight. Lieutenant T. V. Anson was appointed to the charge of her, and as no other officer could well be spared, I volunteered to do duty. This offer Captain Smart accepted; and in half an hour I was on board the slaver with my friend Anson, and bound for Rio de Janeiro once more.

On our arrival, the Commander-in-chief, Rear-Admiral Sir Graham E. Hammond, Bart., when he learned that I had volunteered my services, determined, although it was opposed to the Admiralty regulations, to give me an appointment should a vacancy occur. The *Acteon,* Captain Lord Edward Russell, arriving a few days afterwards, and there being a vacancy for Master, I was appointed to that vessel on the 11th of January, 1836.

We sailed for Buenos Ayres and were stationed there until the 9th of May, making many excursions into the interior and receiving unbounded hospitality, especially from the resident ministers, conspicuous amongst whom was our own minister, Mr. Hamilton, with his wife. It happened that at this time Mr. Hamilton being appointed Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Brazil, it fell to our lot to convey them to Rio. We stayed there only a few days after landing them, and then proceeded to the Falkland Islands, and thence found our way back again to Valparaiso, arriving there on July 25th. After refitting, we cruised amongst the Pacific Islands, anchoring on October 3rd in Resolution Bay, so named by Captain Cook after his vessel.

We found there two resident English missionaries. They had no doubt, to a certain extent, succeeded in the improvement of the habits of the

natives; nevertheless, it must be said that their influence extended only to a limited circle, outside of which the aboriginal customs were in full swing. In the interior, for instance, and in the neighbouring islands, cannibalism was universal. Our government at this time showed great consideration to missionaries; in consequence, when these two gentlemen came off in company of the King of Chustina, a salute was fired in their honour. This so delighted the sable monarch, that he promised our captain that he would build a house in which divine service should be held, and would moreover attend to all the suggestions of the missionaries.

From this place we sailed to the Sandwich Islands, arriving in the harbour of Honolulu on the 19th of November. Here we received much attention not only from our own consul, Mr. Charlton, but from the American consul and from the resident of the Columbian Company, and also from King Tamehameah himself. His Majesty had his own country house fitted up for us. His hospitality was accepted by the Captain and most of the officers. We spent a few days very pleasantly in this novel scene; the enjoyment being much enhanced by the fact that the method of living was exactly that of the country, and of course a complete novelty to us. Whilst we were

at Honolulu a small merchant schooner brought two Roman Catholic priests, who intended to take up their residence in the island and convert the natives; but this was not permitted, and they had to go on to Otaheite. When we started for the latter place, the king accompanied us out of the harbour, and on leaving the ship with the consul, was saluted with twenty-one guns.

We spent Christmas in Otaheite. It should be said, indeed, that we spent two Christmas days; for, as we had come round the Horn and the Islanders had originally come round the Cape, the count of time differed one day. Our Captain, Lord Edward Russell, took several of us to visit Queen Pomaré. We were presented by the missionary Mr. Pritchard. He appeared to be the chief person of influence in the island, and doubtless had contributed much to the suppression of overt immorality. He was subsequently appointed as H.B.M. Consul.

From Otaheite we proceeded through the Archipelago and there made the discovery of three islands. These islands I traced out and sent to the Admiralty; and my tracing was published in the *Nautical Magazine*. Moreover, by the captain's permission, I named them Actæon's group—calling one island Bedford Island, after Lord Russell's father; the second Minto Island, after

the First Lord, whose son was a midshipman on board; and the third Melbourne, after the prime minister. It was gratifying to find that when the particulars were published the Admiralty confirmed my nomenclature.

On the 11th of January, 1837, we arrived off Pitcairn's Island, the memorable spot where the mutineers of the *Bounty* found refuge. When we were there, eighty-three of the descendants of the original settlers were living. They speak the English language, and the village and everything connected with it was in perfect order, the community living together in social content because of their habits of industry and morality. Of course there have been occasions when this happy condition has been disturbed from the outside. Runaway sailors make frequent inroads upon this peaceable spot, and are the chief source of all injury. Previously to our appearance, all had been satisfactory until the arrival of a man named Hill. He was a fellow of no little resolution, who raised a party of his own and usurped the authority of the governor. Consequently, when we arrived there was much dissension. But our captain held an inquiry on shore, when it was at once made clear that Mr. Hill must be got rid of; and in the end he was first deprived of his dignity, and then ordered to quit the island on the

first opportunity. This prompt action was no doubt of great benefit to the patriarchal community.

From Pitcairn's Island we proceeded once more to Valparaiso, and after refitting sailed for Callao. On the latter voyage, we picked up a boat with five unfortunate Americans who, at a distance of seven hundred miles from the coast, had been sent adrift from a whaler. It is not easy to describe the pitiable condition of these poor men—their dreadful sufferings from scurvy, and their utter exhaustion from want of water, of which they had not had a drop for several days. One of them was already dead, but the rest, by the greatest attention on our part, were restored to health.

At this time war was declared between New Grenada and Great Britain. We were, in consequence, ordered to Guayaquil to communicate with the consul, and, had the war continued, it was the intention that we should proceed to Panama to bombard the town. Our stay at Guayaquil, however, lasted until the 10th of April, when dispatches were received announcing that peace had been made. So we returned to Callao and thence to Valparaiso and Coquimbo, from which place the *Blonde* sailed on her return to England. As her departure made our commander the senior officer on the coast, we remained at Valparaiso.

During this period I made many excursions on horseback into the interior of Chili. Sometimes I rode as much as seventy or eighty miles in a day; and on one occasion I accomplished the distance from Aconcagua to Valparaiso, quite ninety miles, in sixteen hours on one horse, resting three hours for bait—not a bad performance. The hospitality of the people is unbounded; I found it especially so with the descendants of the old Spaniards. In Peru, on the other hand, revolutions were so constant, and the state of alarm so great, that we could see little of the interior.

On the 2nd of November the *Actæon* finally left Valparaiso for England. Rounding the Horn, great quantities of icebergs impeded our course, making it especially difficult and dangerous to navigate through the night. We called at Rio de Janeiro to embark our former passenger, the Envoy, Mr. Hamilton, with his lady, and touching at Bahia, arrived, after a tolerably favourable passage, at Spithead on the 3rd of March, 1838. For some time we waited in the expectation of being ordered with dispatches to Canada. But we were not required, and finally went into Portsmouth harbour and were paid off; on which occasion my messmates, as a mark of their kindly feeling towards me, presented me with the mess-plate.

As during this last voyage I visited New

Grenada, as has been said, and as the country is little known, I may venture here to introduce a short story illustrating life in that wild territory in bygone years. I do so with more confidence because the story is not only full of romance and portrays vividly the heroism of which woman is capable, but, also, has the additional virtue of being true.

During the revolution headed by General Bolivar, which eventually liberated New Grenada from the Spanish yoke, the Spanish Viceroy was one Zamano, a most cruel and bigoted man, hated and despised alike by Royalists and Patriots. This tyrant lived in the palace of Santa Fé de Bogota, and his rule was a veritable reign of terror. Conspicuous amongst all who fell victims of his cruelty, the Columbians will ever reverence the memory of Dona Apollineria Zalabariatta—better known as La Pola.

This young lady was of extremely good family in Bogota, and was distinguished both for her beauty and her accomplishments. She was enthusiastic in the cause of the Patriots, even to the extent of devoting herself to the hazardous task of collecting and transmitting to Bolivar secret intelligence concerning the forces, dispositions, and plans of operation of the Royalist army, then in possession of Bogota. She was, at the time,

betrothed to a young gentleman who was also, if less openly, an ardent sympathizer with the cause of liberty.

Of all the entertainments in Bogota, the Tertulias, or evening conversaziones, at her home were the most sought after. The Spanish officers were only too delighted to be permitted to attend them, to listen to the Dona's bright conversation, to be enchanted by her singing to the guitar. Who could suspect so young, so lovely, so brilliant a creature to be a spy? But so it was. In the course of apparently the merest conversation, she would casually inquire of the Royalist officers the whereabouts of their absent companions, and would get them to talk of the movements of their respective regiments. Innocent and unconcerned as both question and answer apparently were, the lady was still able to put the information thus gained from different sources into a connected form. And thus, having ascertained the position of their advanced posts and other important matters, she regularly transmitted the information by a trusty messenger to Bolivar.

But alas! a day of reckoning came. One of her dispatches was intercepted, and the messenger, in imminent fear of his own life, betrayed her secret. She was at once apprehended and brought before a military court. There could be but one result:

she was found guilty and condemned to be shot, together with her lover—although no proof whatever was forthcoming of the complicity of the unfortunate youth. Twelve hours were allowed before the execution should be carried out, during which time the two were placed in the Capilla (a dungeon). But even this short interval would not have been granted, had not Zamano considered the discovery of her accomplices to be of the highest importance.

The utmost efforts of the tyrant were now put forth to force the girl to betray her trust. First, a friar was sent to confess her. The father threatened her with eternal damnation should she dare to conceal anything from him. When it was found that threats of the next world were unavailing, promises of the present were brought into play. She was tempted with the bribe not only of pardon, but of large rewards, both for herself and her betrothed, if only she would name her confederates. But in spite of threats and promises the noble girl stood firm. She vowed that one and one only was her accomplice, and that one the messenger she had employed. She absolutely denied that there was any one else.

On the next day the lovers were led out, and being bound together on a kind of seat, were securely surrounded with troops. A picket of

grenadiers was then told off to shoot them, and marched close up to the spot. When the terrible moment was thus come, when all was in readiness, once more she was offered a pardon if she would confess. But without any fear, with as it were a noble contempt, she declared that if she had any accomplices she would scorn to save her life by betraying them; and she added that as Bolivar was fast approaching, they could learn on his arrival who were her accomplices. Here, noticing that her companion was hesitating as if about to speak—a hesitation very natural on the threshold of death—she implored him as her last request that, if he had ever loved her, he would now show by his death that he was worthy of her choice; she reminded him that whatever disclosures he might make, the tyrant Zamano would never spare his life: and she adjured him to take comfort in the knowledge that his death would be shared by her he loved.

When this had been said, the friar retired and the firing party made ready. Then and then only she seemed to feel a momentary fear. "You have the heart, brothers, to kill a woman!" she said, addressing herself to the soldiers; and then, immediately recovering her firmness, drew her saga across her face and awaited death. On the saga, a sort of shawl used to cover head and neck, when

thus displayed, were discovered the words, "Viva la Patria!" embroidered in gold. So much only could be noticed, when the fatal signal was given from the Viceroy's balcony, and the two instantly fell dead. Two days afterwards Bolivar entered the town, too late to save this noble woman.

CHAPTER IX.

MASTER H.M.S. *TALBOT* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1838.

Join the *Talbot*—Letter from Captain Lord Edward Russell—Cintra—Cadiz—Alicante—Barcelona—Minorca—Bay of Palermo—Faro of Messina—A man overboard—We give him up—A risky return—An agreeable surprise—Malta—Church of St. John—The silver gates—Athens—The Temple of Jupiter Olympius—The Acropolis—King Otho—The Grove of Socrates—The Sultan's birthday—A grand demonstration—A brilliant ball—False to his trust—The sail-needle—Captain Codrington's acuteness—Scio—The Scio massacre—A terrible retribution—Turkish vengeance—Desolation.

BEFORE I was paid off from the *Actæon* I was appointed Master of H.M.S. *Talbot*, Captain H. J. Codrington, and joined at Plymouth. I then went to Trinity House, and passed my examination for master of a frigate, and on my return to the ship had the pleasure to receive the following letter from my late captain:—

"BELGRAVE SQUARE,
"*April 16th*, 1838.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I have sent a spy-glass to Devonport by to-day's coach, which I beg you will accept from me as a slight token of remembrance. I

hope it may prove a good one, and be useful to you in the *Talbot.* I hope you have not forgotten the copy of your Remark-book which I spoke to you about.

"Wishing you health and happiness, and every success in your profession,

"Believe me very faithfully yours,

"EDWARD RUSSELL."

The inscription on the glass is: "Mr. George Biddlecombe, from his friend, Lord Edward Russell. 1838."

We left Plymouth for the Mediterranean on the 17th June, 1838. Rather curiously, Lord Henry Russell, Lord Edward's brother, was a supernumerary lieutenant on board the *Talbot.* He and I became great friends.

Passing inside the Burling Islands, we arrived off Lisbon on a dark night when it was blowing a heavy gale. In such conditions, to cross the bar of the Tagus is somewhat hazardous, but there was no hesitation in proceeding. The officers of the other of H.M.'s ships then lying in the harbour, were not a little surprised to find we had entered under the circumstances.

Whilst I was at Lisbon I had the opportunity to visit Cintra and its castle, the latter at the time the residence of the Queen of Portugal.

I should perhaps premise the short description of the place that follows, by saying that it, as well as the descriptions of the places visited during my cruise in the Mediterranean, does not pretend to guide-book accuracy. The accounts given are simply the impressions which at the time —now thirty years ago—I received of the several places, and as such must be taken. I hope that they will be found to be presented in sufficiently quick succession and diversity to interest, and so warrant my placing them before the reader.

The castle at Cintra stands on an elevation seventeen hundred feet above the sea, and commands views as extensive as they are magnificent. To the west the prospect is uninterrupted to the broad expanse of the Atlantic; to the south, the eye travels for some twenty miles over a fair champaign interspersed with villages to the Tagus, alive with shipping, and crowned by the city of Lisbon; whilst in the northern direction is to be seen the noble palace of Mafra. The 28th of June, the day of our visit, was the Queen's coronation, so when we reached the top of the edifice we sang "Long live Victoria!" and gave three hearty cheers. Our enthusiasm considerably astonished the Catholic priests; they could not make it out. They were, however, very civil to us, having previously had the peal of bells rung in honour of our

visit. At dinner the same evening, at Cintra, we drank her Majesty's health. I remember well that William Peel, then a first-class volunteer, and Edgar Drummond also, were of the party; in fact, under my charge.

Before we returned to Lisbon we visited the village church of St. Peter, and there saw the Queen of Portugal and the Prince Consort Ferdinand attending mass. Of Lisbon and its filth I need say nothing, but pass on to Cadiz, where our stay was twenty-four hours. From the sea the appearance of the city of Cadiz, with its Cathedral dome towering high above all other buildings, is very fine. But on landing the streets will be found narrow and the houses six or eight stories in height as in Lisbon. But here the likeness between the two places ended. The difference in cleanliness was very remarkable. At Cadiz all the houses are whitewashed, which adds greatly to their appearance. The Alameda fronts the sea, and its trees afford pleasant shady walks during the heat of the day, whilst, as night falls, it is, as a rule, crowded with the ladies whose grace of form is so renowned. The Cathedral is a superb building, and contains many paintings of the highest class. Its exterior was not completed.

Touching at Gibraltar, we proceeded along the south coast of Spain, and passed, but did not com-

municate with, Carthagena. We kept close in shore near the spot where the earthquake of 1827 destroyed the villages, and arriving at Alicante, dropped anchor for a few hours. During the Peninsular war, Alicante was held by the British, being at the time considered the third city in Spain. It is very irregularly built, but like all Spanish towns, however small, boasts its Alameda (promenade) and theatre. The inhabitants are mostly Carlists. They are a bloodthirsty race; murders are of frequent occurrence, and looked upon as matters of little concern.

From Alicante we proceeded to Barcelona. This is a splendid city, full of magnificent buildings, has botanical gardens, and a splendid Alameda, the latter crowded in the evening with elegantly dressed people. What struck me most in the place was the industry of the inhabitants: the mercantile population were especially active, and it was quite the exception to see an idle man.

Leaving the coast, we sailed for Port Mahon, the capital of Minorca. Here is a spacious harbour. The island has been several times in our possession, until finally ceded to Spain at the peace of 1802. On entering the port, the graves of our brave countrymen killed in its capture are conspicuous close to the site of the ancient castle, of which, now, the ruins only remain. We were well received here. The

town itself is well situated on rising ground, and has a cathedral which boasts the possession of a famous organ; for not only is its tone said to be equal to that of any in the world, but it has had an adventure of its own. In transit to this place, it was captured by the French, though Napoleon ordered it to be returned to the inhabitants.

We next stood over to Sicily, passing Mount Eryx, on which are the remains of the celebrated Temple of Venus, at one time thought to be the largest in the world, but now a heap of ruins. Its site is three thousand feet above the sea. We now came to most enchanting scenery. The spacious bay of Palermo gradually opened out, its shores dotted with picturesque villages set against a background of cultivated land, the sun, as it sank to rest, gilding the city and the high land near it. As day broke next morning, the light set off Mount Ætna in its towering height (eleven thousand feet), with beautiful effect. But the grand spectacle was left for the succeeding evening, when the calm weather permitted us to see on the one side Stromboli, and on the other Ætna, both in eruption and sending forth volumes of smoke. The grandeur of the scene is beyond description.

We now entered the Faro or Strait of Messina. It divides Sicily from the mainland, and is at the entrance a mile and a half in width, gradually

opening towards the southward. After passing the point, Messina, situated on the east side of the island, comes into view, well shown off by the very high cultivated land in the rear of it, with the summit of Mount Ætna towering over all. On the opposing mainland the city of Reggio is conspicuous; a place chiefly notorious as the scene of the so-called military trial, but, in reality, assassination of the dashing Murat. The country around Reggio up to the Calabrian Mountains is also highly cultivated. The Faro is alive with boats, and especially at night.

When we had passed through the strait, the breeze freshened to a gale from north-west, with considerable sea. Whilst I was in my cabin at five o'clock in the afternoon, I heard the cry of "Man overboard." I was on deck in a moment, and made for the boat which was being lowered. Finding there were only three men in it, I slipped down by the tackle and joined them, and we lost no time in reaching the spot where the buoy had been thrown. We were much disappointed to find no one. There was but one conclusion; the unfortunate fellow, whoever he was, had sunk, and there was nothing left for us but to pick up the buoy and return to the ship. But this was not an easy matter. There were but three men, as has been said, and in the heavy sea the oar of the one who

pulled midship broke, when the boat got into the trough of the sea, and at once filled. Fortunately Captain Codrington saw our peril, and by most adroit management got the ship to the boat, when ropes were thrown to us, and we were quickly safe on board. Our own danger at an end, we were beginning to lament the fate of the object of our search, when a surprise awaited us. The man had been in the main-chains exercising heaving the lead, when the bight of the line fouled him and he fell overboard. He was lucky to be able to save himself in the mizzen-chains without much injury; but was so thoroughly frightened that he kept where he was, speechless for a time. And there he remained undiscovered until the boat had left the ship—for all hands were looking astern to see the body rise near the life-buoy. So it turned out we had had our anxious and perilous adventure for nothing; although individually I was repaid by the genuine pleasure which Captain Codrington exhibited on our safe return.

We refitted at Malta. This harbour, with its extensive and almost impregnable fortifications, is, as is well known, of the utmost importance to Great Britain. Its supplies are mostly brought from Sicily, and, as owing to the scarcity of pasturage it has no cattle, there is always a two years' supply of salt provisions kept in the island, in

event of a blockade. I was much interested in my visit to the spot. Valetta overlooks the harbour. On going on shore, and, escaping as best you can the numerous beggars who infest the landing-place, you reach the town by ascending the nix-numgary stairs. Here the ancient church of St. John is a striking object, and a visit to it, well-spent time. The inner walls are of mosaic, and the floor of marble. The drapery is of rich crimson velvet, and the gates of silver. These are the gates which, when Bonaparte captured the island, escaped his rapacity for works of the kind by an ingenious device of the Knights of Malta. They simply painted them copper-colour, and so deceived the conqueror — the baser metal offering little attraction. The Governor's palace is good and a pleasant residence, except in the heat of mid-summer, when all who can do so, escape into the country.

Leaving Malta on the 8th of August for the Smyrna Station, we had no sooner arrived at Athens on our way, than, as may be supposed, we started to see as much as possible of classic ground.

Our first visit was to the site of the once magnificent Temple of Jupiter Olympius — when it flourished, the largest in the world, and the shrine to which thousands of visitors from vast distances

came to pay homage. Commenced by the Greeks and finished by the Romans, it boasted one hundred and twenty-eight pillars of marble of the Corinthian order, over eighteen feet in circumference and some seventy feet in height, which stood on a base surrounded by an immensely thick wall, occupying three hundred and twenty-four square yards. Of these columns only sixteen now remain, and of these but two or three are perfect. The Ilissus, which runs by it, was once a river, but is at the present day a stream, and often dry. On its eastern side, hewn from the solid rock and about half a mile in length, was the ancient amphitheatre. A thick wall surrounded the whole; but at the time of my visit little remained except the cave into which the wild beasts, used in the entertainments, were driven. This, indeed, is still perfect, notwithstanding the centuries that have elapsed since its construction.

We visited the palace, at the time in course of erection, in which marble is extensively used, and from it passed on to the Acropolis. The latter had necessarily a great interest for us. The natural position on an eminence, commanding the surrounding plains, aided by Greek military art, had made it, when completed two thousand five hundred years ago, the largest and most formidable fortification of the time. The space enclosed is about

half a mile in length and nearly the same in width. Here we visited the Parthenon, and saw in passing the remains of a small theatre and the Temple of Victory all built of marble, inimitably carved. The small chapel with the bomb-proof dome, which has withstood a bombardment of several months without receiving any injury, naturally attracted my attention. I noticed in the Temple of Jupiter the only pillars formed by full-length statues; and here, also, in different parts were some well-executed figures of human beings and wild beasts. It is not an easy matter to picture the scene presented in this place in ancient days. It then held the whole of Greece in awe, and its priests compelled the people to pay tribute. And even when attacked by the hordes of Persians, in number some two millions, led by their king, the invaders were in the end driven back, and but three hundred thousand left to make a temporary stand before beating a final retreat; whilst the plains of the conflict were literally filled with the skeletons of those composing this ill-starred expedition.

From the Acropolis we went to the Lantern of Demosthenes, which, about twenty feet high, is hewn from solid marble. It is now, of course, very dilapidated. The dirt of the modern town did not offer much attraction, and we soon sought the

promenade, where we were fortunate to see King Otho and his queen; he a fine-looking man of dark complexion, and she a handsome woman. Their Majesties were on horseback and had only a few attendants. Having paid our respects to H.M. Minister, Sir Edmund Lyons, we found our way aboard, passing, as we did so, through the grove of olive-trees in which Socrates and Plato so often discoursed, and were shown the spot, now the site of a farmhouse, where their house stood.

On the next morning, we sailed for Smyrna, passing on our course the spot where Falconer's shipwreck took place. On our arrival at our destination we found the Turkish fleet, consisting of twenty ships of the line, under the command of the Lord High Admiral of Turkey; and on the following day we were presented to his Excellency on board the flag-ship, and had pipes and coffee. The 21st of August was the Sultan's birthday. On the eve of it, the Turkish fleet commenced firing salutes, the ships being illuminated with blue-lights, at the same time sending up innumerable rockets. It was a magnificent sight altogether, and as the batteries ashore joined in, the cannonade was deafening almost beyond conception. In the morning the whole of the vessels of the foreign navies in port, dressed ship and fired a royal salute, repeated at noon and again at sunset;

and in this way brought to a conclusion a brilliant celebration.

On the following day, the French Consul-general gave a ball to the Lord High Admiral and to Reschid and Tahir Pachas, who had just arrived—the former *en route* to Paris, the latter to the interior of the country, of which he was Governor. The foreign naval officers were invited, and I had the honour to accompany Captain Codrington. The Lord High Admiral and the Pachas were magnificently dressed; and the latter added much to the ensemble of the entertainment by the splendour of the cortége which each brought with him. Tahir Pacha, in particular, was accompanied by fifty horsemen with flambeaux. He it was who commanded the Turkish fleet at Navarino when Admiral Codrington was in command of the allied fleet. On hearing that Captain Codrington, his old antagonist's son, was in the ballroom, the Pacha sought him out, and embraced him, inquiring most cordially after his father, with whom after the battle, it appears, he was on excellent terms. Grand as was the entertainment, we were not sorry to get on board our vessel again; for not only was the heat intense, but there was some danger from the plague then raging on shore.

We did not stay long at Smyrna, proceeding to the Vourlu Roads, some twenty miles distant, and

a very different climate. Whilst here a small Ionian vessel, homeward bound, came to anchor. The owner was master, and his son mate. They had disposed of their cargo at Smyrna, and had the proceeds, fifteen hundred dollars in cash, on board. After anchoring close to us, the master found he had left some important documents behind him at Smyrna, and started off the same evening to fetch them, leaving the son in charge. He, the son, kept the first watch, and was relieved at midnight, when all was quite safe, by one of the seamen. But when he awoke at dawn and went to the cabin, he found the man in an apparently deplorable state; his hands tied and his forehead bleeding. The fellow had his story ready. According to this, the Turks had boarded the vessel in the night, and first knocking him down, had tied his hands and proceeded to plunder the vessel, threatening that if he attempted to give an alarm, they would murder him without more ado. The mate came to us to report, and Captain Codrington sent me to inquire into the affair. The money of course was gone, and on examining the chests of the crew I could find nothing. But in the box belonging to the injured man I noticed a sail-needle amongst the clothes, which I thought a strange place for it. On returning and reporting this, amongst other things, to Captain Codrington, he

very quickly surmised that the man himself, and no other, was the thief. Acting on the notion, we returned together to the Ionian vessel, when Captain Codrington accosted the man with the scratched forehead in his own language. "Why," he said, "you are the robber yourself, and scratched those marks on your forehead with the sail-needle found in your chest." The tone was so positive that the fellow at once made a clean breast of it, and took us to a small island where he had deposited the money. He explained that he had floated it ashore on a plank, but in performing the feat had lost five hundred dollars; and he added that he had first scratched his forehead and then had tied his own hands in the way in which he had been found. Shortly after the master returned, and the vessel sailed for Corfu.

The English fleet coming to Vourlu, we, with it, proceeded to Scio, where the Turkish fleet joined us, and the two combined. We were a few days here, and I took advantage of the time not only to visit this beautiful island, but also to learn some trustworthy particulars concerning the notorious massacre.

The impression left in my mind, as the result of this inquiry, was that the Sciotes contributed no little to bring this fearful retribution upon themselves. There can be no doubt that these people

were the most effeminate and irresolute of all the Greek islanders, their merchants living in great luxury; and that from the commencement of the revolution, although often implored or menaced by their brave countrymen, they refused to fight for the liberties of Greece — preferring a strict neutrality which guaranteed them their indolence and their gains. So well did they keep up appearances that the Turkish fleet never molested them. In 1822, however, a Greek leader landed a body of troops from Lemnos to attack the citadel, then held by but a small Turkish garrison. The Sciotes, fancying that the day of freedom was come, and, it may be presumed, with it victory without danger, joined their countrymen. The citadel, in consequence, was soon taken, and all the unfortunate Turks, whether soldiers or simply residents in the town, were murdered. But this was no sooner done than the Turkish fleet entered the anchorage, at sight of which the Greek contingent, having no possible chance of an equal combat, instantly embarked, leaving the Sciotes to their fate.

Those of the islanders who had not taken part in the revolt and succeeding murders were strictly confined to the lower orders. Nevertheless, some two hundred of the chief merchants and magistrates went on board the Captain-Pacha's

ship, and unblushingly made the most solemn protests of innocence and submission. They were received with extreme politeness, and refreshments were ordered for them; but no sooner had the Pacha landed his forces, about six thousand men, than the order for the massacre was given. In the present day we know something of Turkish cruelty in reprisal. But fearful as are the accounts of recent massacres, they do not exceed, if they equal, the tale of horror which I heard in detail from the Sciotes themselves. Every house and garden was strewn with corpses. In their luxurious retreats—beneath the orange-trees, by the fountains, and on the marble pavement—lay the young, the beautiful, and the aged. And lying as they fell, singly or in groups, day after day passed with no hand to bear them to the grave. At length they were thrown into promiscuous heaps, or into large pits dug to serve as universal sepulchres. It is computed that twenty-five thousand persons perished in the two or three days; and happy were the few who, by escaping to the mountains, or to the ships and boats on the coast, were snatched from so terrible a doom. The riggings of the vessels of the Turkish fleet were covered with the ears and noses, the horrid trophies of the massacre. Women in numbers were sent to be sold as slaves in the public markets. Many of the

merchants who had been captured, and whose lives had been guaranteed, were executed, their property confiscated, and their families sold. Seventy-eight primates of Scio, who had been detained as hostages, were put to death; as well as the inhabitants of thirteen villages, who, under the advice of the consul, had submitted.

The soil of Scio produces abundance of fruit—figs, olives, pomegranates, and many others; the climate is healthy and delightful: but alas! wherever one looked, the once charming country homes were nothing but ruins, and too plainly told the tale of devastation.

CHAPTER X.

MASTER H.M.S. *TALBOT* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (*continued*), 1838-40.

The plains of Troy—Take the fever—The scenery of the Faro—Malta—Religious procession—Crude representation of the Resurrection—Corfu—Argostoli—Extraordinary disappearance of the sea—Missolonghi—The siege—Turkish cruelty—A remarkable monument—Byron's house—H.R.H. Prince George of Cambridge at Corfu—Zante—The pitch wells—Patras and Vostizza—Delphi—The famous cave and spring—Salona and Galaxidi—Corinth—Loutraki—A tour through the Ionian Islands with the Lord High Commissioners—Cerigo—Advanced Education—A noted case—Navarino—A necessary victory—Santa Maura—Discover Talbot's shoal—An important prisoner—Dispute with Naples—Vessels detained—Captain Codrington's device—Experience of Albanian piracy—Murder, and immunity of murderers.

THE combined fleet, under the command-in-chief of Admiral the Honourable Robert Stopford, proceeded from Scio to Besika Bay at the entrance to the Dardanelles, affording us the chance to visit the plains of Troy. But of this spot, so celebrated in ancient history, there was nothing of importance remaining, save the numerous mounds marking the graves of the celebrities of those days. The view of Mount Athos in the distance called to mind that in one of the convents there is pre-

served what is said to be a piece of the cross on which our Saviour was crucified, with the nail-holes still perfect.

We were now detached and went to Mitylene, where we surveyed the harbour of Sigri, and thence proceeded to Vourlu and on to Smyrna. At the latter place I took the fever, and was very seriously ill; so much so, that it was not until the 10th of January of the following year (1839) when I was again carried on deck. Not only Captain Codrington, but all my messmates without exception, exhibited the greatest sympathy and kindness at the time. On January 19th we left Smyrna for Malta, and were caught, off the coast of Calabria, in a severe gale which lasted five days, during which we kept near the southern part of the Faro of Messina. The beauty of the strait and its surrounding scenery never struck me more forcibly than on the occasion of this visit; and certainly it cannot be better seen or enjoyed than from on board ship. The Faro lies before you, visible for miles; its several promontories set off by the chains of mountains behind, whilst above all towers Mount Ætna. In truth, it is a combination of mountain scenery with the picturesque beauties of pastoral country and nestling villages that cannot be surpassed; and when the declining sun strikes on the Calabrian hills,

lighting up the different points with rich and varying tints, displaying the distant forests, and, in the background, range beyond range of all forms and shapes—the picture thus presented is at once magnificent, beautiful, and sublime.

We arrived at Malta on the 5th of February, and had twenty-five days' quarantine—never a very agreeable ordeal. When it was ended, the ship was hove down for repairs to the keel. During our stay, the Queen Dowager arrived in H.M.S. *Hastings*, when a regatta, for the boats of the fleet, was successfully carried out. Amongst the places visited during this stay were St. Paul's caves and the catacombs of St. Paul's Church. The former are said to be the place to which, when shipwrecked, the apostle retreated; and his statue adorns the church. The catacombs are twenty feet under ground, and several miles in extent; in fact, it is asserted that the Venetians lived in them. Here are to be found, cut out of the solid rock, what were the burial-places of several families; and, at least the priests told us pointing to the compartments, the dust in them was veritably all that remained of poor humanity.

The religious processions of the Roman Catholics were, as a rule, very grand; and on Easter Sunday there was a chance offered to witness one of the most pretentious of them. It started at three

o'clock in the morning, all sorts and conditions of persons leaving the church and carrying lighted torches. After them came an execrable band which performed at every corner, and to this succeeded a crowd of priests bearing lighted candles and followed by a figure, representing our Saviour, mounted on a pedestal some twelve feet square, and having a Maltese flag. It was borne by thirty men carrying flambeaux and candles, and stopped at every street. When daylight at length made its appearance, the figure and surrounding crowd were at the foot of the principal street, from which the ascent is very steep. Presently, the crowd, which for some time had been busy making signs, opened out; and of a sudden, from the midst of it, the men carrying the figure started with it, at a rapid pace and with a great waving of flags, for the summit of the hill. This represented the resurrection, or was intended so to do. This over, the procession made for St. John's Church, where every possible decoration was displayed, and the Opera troupe, specially engaged, continued singing throughout the day. The other churches, also, were crowded; and I paid a visit to the Greek Church during service. It was not decorated so profusely as the Roman Catholic churches, but I was much struck with the solemn attention and devout demeanour of the worshippers.

We left Malta after a stay of a few weeks for the Ionian Islands, arriving at Corfu on April 18th. This is a beautifully cultivated island, with immense fortifications and a citadel for the troops. The Lord High Commissioner, at the time of our visit, was General Sir Howard Douglas, and from him, as well as from the President and military, we received unbounded hospitality. Picnic parties, and the excellent shooting on the Albanian coast, added to the pleasures of our visit; and in addition to these amusements there was an opera company at Corfu. Cephalonia was one of the several islands we went to. I was much pleased with the scenery on entering the spacious harbour of Argostoli. Mountains clad in verdure encircle it; the small town of Lixuri is situated below them on the bank; whilst, in the distance, the view is closed in by loftier ranges, which in winter are covered with snow. A small island at the entrance, once the site of a convent for Greek priests, has now a lighthouse on it. The town of Argostoli lies in the inner harbour; and here the English Resident, as well as the troops, lived. The country about is chiefly meadow land, enclosed by high hills thickly planted with vines. At the point is a most notable disappearance of the sea-water. Here, there is a hole into which the sea runs with a force so sufficient that it has been

utilised to turn a mill—and disappears. Where it goes to, no one can tell. It is suggested that it may be lost in volcanic fissures, as occasional slight earthquakes take place in the locality.

From Cephalonia we proceeded to Missolonghi; anchoring, because of the shallow water, about four miles from the town. The town itself is a miserable place, about a foot above the sea-level, but was one of the last to stand a siege previously to the final emancipation of the Greeks from Turkish rule. The combined Turkish and Egyptian army, on this occasion, occupied the plains in the rear of the town, which was surrounded with a ditch and a wall loopholed for musketry. As the fire from this defence kept the enemy at a distance, the latter carried out a strict blockade, by which the Greeks were deprived of all assistance either in arms or supplies. Botzaris was the undaunted general in command of the place, and for two long years he kept the enemy at bay, until a stronger foe, starvation, came to help them. Thus, in spite of the heroism of the besieged, there were but the alternatives—to die of hunger, or to surrender. The cruelty of the Turks to prisoners was so well known, that the latter could not be thought of. Botzaris therefore consulted with his chief officers, and resolved, as a last chance, to throw open one of the gates on a certain night,

that all who could possibly escape through the Turkish camp should have the opportunity to do so. The night came, and about twelve hundred, men, women, and children, started through the gateway, and reached the open country; though numbers of them were subsequently captured and, of course, massacred. When the Turks finally entered the town, they committed, as is their custom, the greatest enormities, murdered every living being, and burnt the place to ashes.

The remains of the massacred people were collected and thrown into a heap, around which a wall has been erected, and in it a marble tablet is set to the memory of the victims. Near the spot stands a pretty square building of stone, on the top of which is a coffin containing the body of the heroic leader. On the top of this sarcophagus, which is of marble, there is sculptured the figure of a boy of ten, the son of the general, represented in a reclining position and pointing to the inscription bearing the name of his father, Marco Botzaris, one of the noblest of patriots and bravest of men. An iron railing guards the whole.

But for an Englishman, the greatest interest that Missolonghi has, is that here Lord Byron breathed his last; and in spite of the intense heat, we started eagerly to visit a spot so famous. The house in which the poet died stood

in a ruinous state; for close to it a magazine had been blown up, and had shaken it to pieces, and in this condition it had been allowed to remain. Yet the Turks had exhibited a reverence for his memory; for when the troops entered the town, strict orders were given that his residence should be respected.

On our return to Corfu, we found that H.R.H. Prince George of Cambridge had arrived on his way from Constantinople to England. His stay was prolonged over the 24th of May, her Majesty's birthday, when a grand ball was given at the palace by Sir Howard and Lady Douglas. It was a magnificent affair, attended by everybody of importance in the islands. On opening the ball, his Royal Highness did me the honour to request me to be his *vis-à-vis*—my partner on the occasion being the wife of Captain Bond, 53rd Regiment. Whilst here, we heard of the death of the Sultan Mahmoud, and also a report that the Turkish army, sixty thousand strong, had been defeated by the Egyptians; when we proceeded to the Gulf of Lepanto, touching at the Island of Zante on our way.

The town of Zante, containing nineteen thousand inhabitants, is near the beach and remarkably clean. Besides the usual landing-place, it boasts a mole extending some distance into the sea,

and forming the public promenade. The western part of the island is mountainous; but the land to the east consists of plains and valleys luxuriant in vineyards and orange groves. There are in the island some natural wells of pitch. The liquid boils up, and is collected by dipping bushes of myrtle attached to a pole, and becomes hardened by exposure. After a short stay we visited Patras, on the Morea side, at the entrance of the Gulf of Lepanto. A castle at the back commands the town, which is extensive, but struck me as being miserably poor. In 1826 the English bombarded the place, then in the possession of the Turks; it surrendered, and was handed over to the Greeks on their emancipation. The monuments of antiquity are nearly all lost; but a Doric frieze and a few small Corinthian and Ionic capitals are still visible. To the west of the town, near the beach, is a well—once the famous oracular fountain dedicated to Ceres.

The entrance to the Gulf of Lepanto is defended by two castles close to the beach; and when they are passed, a mountainous country opens out, with the city of Lepanto on the north shore. We, however, proceeded to Vostizza lying opposite. This is the ancient Ægium. It is close to the beach, and was of very considerable importance up to 1817, when an earthquake did much damage; inso-

much that the town never thoroughly recovered, although at the time of our visit it seemed on the way to improvement, the surrounding country being advantageously planted with vines. A notably grand plane-tree stands at the landing-place; and here, too, by excavation, good fresh water may be obtained, although at the distance of two yards only the salt waves wash the beach.

At Vostizza we surveyed the anchorage, and then stood across the Gulf to Salona, a miserable town lying at the foot of Mount Parnassus. But it at least afforded us mules and donkeys on which to visit Delphi. The road to this ancient spot, which is situated seven miles inland, leads over a plain bounded by high mountains, and fertile in olive-trees, through which runs the small river Skisa, the ancient Plistus. Mount Parnassus itself is part of an inner ridge of mountains whose summit is constantly topped with snow. The site of Delphi, once so famous for the temple and oracle of Apollo, is on a mountain; and above it towers the immense rock in which is the renowned Pythian cave. This latter no modern Greek has ventured to explore. The present village of Castri is a miserable substitute for the once famous town; yet some of the features of the scene remain to enchant the visitor. Between two rocks, not less than two hundred feet in height, still pours a cool

and limpid stream which, though decreased in volume, is no other than the Castalian spring, from which the Muses drank; and nothing can exceed the splendour of the scenery around, the contrast afforded by the height of the surrounding mountains and the depth and extent of the valleys, being fine beyond description.

We surveyed, in turn, the anchorage of Salona and that of Galaxidi, which lies on the west side. The entrance to the latter place is difficult for vessels of draught, but not for coasters. It is a great resort of the latter class of vessels, for which a convenient creek is formed by the point of land on which the town stands. It struck me as likely to become an important place. The building of coast vessels is carried on extensively; while the inhabitants are active and hard-working, and are favourably placed to get the timber employed in the construction of the vessels, which are of good form and sail remarkably well. They are employed principally in the trade of the Archipelago and Black Sea, and are well handled, for the Greeks are expert sailors.

Our next anchorage was in the bay of Corinth. The present town is very scattered; but amongst the corn-fields traces of the ancient walls are visible. Vestiges of the canal which Nero commenced to connect the Gulf of Lepanto and the

Ægean Sea are also to be seen; but the place of interest is the Acrocorinthus, the Acropolis of Corinth, which, situated on the hill, is surrounded by a wall two miles in circumference. Thousands of human beings have been slain on this spot in the many assaults upon it. There is here a well which is notable from the fact that, although it is so much above the level of the sea, perfectly cool water can at all times be obtained at a depth of fifty feet. From the summit the view is magnificent, extending to Athens, and round to Mount Parnassus and the Morea. To the south-west of the modern town are the ruins of an ancient Doric temple. The columns are of great antiquity, and are composed of stone covered with a kind of stucco, giving them a resemblance to Egyptian granite; and near the market-place are vestiges of extensive baths. We visited Loutraki, a village on the north side of the bay; a small place, but of some importance as the spot at which to land for the purpose of reaching various places on this side of the Gulf. It is, moreover, possessed of some tepid springs, considered highly beneficial in certain disorders, and these attract invalids.

We returned to Corfu, and on the 10th of September embarked the Lord High Commissioner for his tour through the Ionian Islands. The first we touched at was the southernmost, Cerigo, where

we were crowded with visitors, for it is seldom that a man-of-war goes there. All who came behaved extremely well, and I was agreeably surprised, on landing and visiting the schools, to find education so well attended to; the children being orderly, writing and reading their own language well, and a few speaking English fluently. This island is not very fertile; but everything that can be, is done by its industrious population, some eight thousand people, and the roads are notably good. His Excellency was pleased to invite the officers of the ship to accompany him ashore, and we all went to see a noted cave on the west side of the island. The Greek priests went with us, and at the entrance we were each provided with a wax candle. The extent of the cave is unknown, for it has never been thoroughly explored. It is an immense chasm, some five hundred feet from the top of the hill. On entering, the pillars formed by the droppings, hard as stone and occasionally crystallized, are beautiful objects. In the pools of water within the cave, the clothes of those who have been ill are left for a considerable time, and so purified. From Cerigo we proceeded to a bay, where an enormous castle on the promontory is a conspicuous object. It is now happily in ruins; for within its walls thousands of human beings have been put to death.

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Our next visit was to the scene of the celebrated battle of Navarino, the naval engagement which decided the independence of Greece. It had a peculiar interest for us, not only because, as I have stated earlier, Captain Codrington's father was in command of the allied fleet, but he himself was present at the action, serving as mate on board his father's flagship the *Asia*. At the time, Ibrahim Pacha with an army of sixty thousand men was ravaging the Morea, murdering, as is their fashion, men, women, and children alike, when Admiral Codrington, in command of the combined English, French, and Russian fleet, engaged the Turkish fleet under Tahir Pacha, in the bay of Navarino. To aid the enemy there was, in addition to the immensely strong castle, a strong battery which the Turks had raised on shore. But all to no purpose. The castle was blown up, the battery silenced, and the enemy completely defeated. The Turks were almost annihilated, and there was great loss of life on the side of the allies, as might be expected in so sanguinary an engagement; but fortunately it was decisive enough to free the Greeks from Ottoman rule. The castle has since been rebuilt, and has a covered battery of heavy guns. It commands the entrance to the bay, which is between an island and the mainland.

The town, surrounded by mountain scenery, is small, but improving.

Having visited all the principal islands, where without exception the Lord High Commissioner was extremely well received by the inhabitants, we returned to Corfu on the 10th of October. Later in the year we again had some of the excellent sport on the Albanian coast—one of our parties bagging, in a day, one hundred and fifty-four woodcocks, besides other game. In the early part of the following year (1840) we cruised round the island of Corfu and along the Albanian coast as far as Santa Maura, surveying all the anchorages. Santa Maura possesses good fishing and any quantity of fruit, but the climate is the worst in the Ionian Islands. The fort is connected by a low mud causeway with the Albanian coast. Turning northward from Santa Maura, we reached Durazzo in the Adriatic, and completed a survey of the bay, discovering in it a shoal which we named "Talbot's Shoal;" and again altering our course to the south, we entered, on the 8th of March, a small bay in Albania, where we found a Greek brig with a small coasting vessel anchored. Noticing a boat pulling for land with great haste, we gave chase, and just reached the beach as an officer jumped ashore. Our men ran after him and brought him back;

and we then took charge of the boat's crew, as we found that their business was to recruit Albanians for Mehemet Ali. We took the brig to Corfu, where the officer was brought before the authorities. He proved to be one Ibrahim Bey, and being sent to Constantinople, was the first of the Egyptians taken prisoner in the war of 1840.

In April, in consequence of the war with Naples, we were ordered to cruise in the Adriatic, and were successful in detaining a good many vessels. To Captain Codrington must be given credit for the invention of a novel plan to bring vessels to, when at a distance, which otherwise would make their capture problematical. He had a nine pounder slung at the foreyard arm, at an angle of forty-five degrees. A shot from this was carried so far that the astonished Neapolitans at once surrendered. We dispatched our captures to Corfu, and cruised up the Adriatic as far as the Italian town of Gallipoli; but our voyage was not very successful, as few vessels would now venture to sea. All we had previously detained, were set free on the settlement of the dispute with the Neapolitans.

A few days after our return to Corfu, we had information of a horrible murder on board an Italian vessel lying some fifteen miles away. We at once proceeded to investigate the matter; and found that at ten o'clock in the morning, when

calm and the vessel at anchor, a boat had pulled off to her from the Albanian coast, some seven miles distant. The fellows in it, the true Albanian robbers, having boarded the vessel, had shot the captain and one of the crew dead, stabbed another of the seamen, and then had almost gutted the vessel, and made off with their plunder. We searched every creek in the coast for some trace of the murderers; vainly, for they were safe away. Robberies were constantly taking place in this part; the Albanians, indeed, are a bloodthirsty set of scoundrels acknowledging no laws, and their immunity from capture makes them the more reckless and ferocious. Their purpose effected, off they start for the mountains, where it is worse than useless to attempt to look for them. Were it not for the men-of-war, no boat would be safe in these waters.

Shortly after our return, H.M.S. *Tyne* came to relieve us, as we were ordered to Malta. We sailed from Corfu with much regret, for we had had a most enjoyable time. His Excellency gave a special ball to us on the occasion of our departure.

CHAPTER XI.

MASTER H.M.S. *TALBOT* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (*continued*), 1840.

Mitylene—The Dardanelles—Constantinople—The Golden Horn—Animated scene—The sweet waters of Asia—Turkish carriages—The ladies of the harem—Therapia—The Sultan watches us at cricket—His personal appearance—Stamboul; the bazaars—The Mausoleum; curious tombs—A visit to the seraglio—The Mint—The howling dervishes—Grand procession to the mosque—The Sultan's steam yacht.

WE arrived at Malta on the 13th of July, 1840, and after refitting proceeded to join the fleet at the island of Mitylene. The town of Mitylene is not of the importance it was, but vessels of war are still built there. From this place we were ordered to Constantinople, and on the 14th of August entered the Dardanelles.

Public attention has lately been so much turned to Turkey that I naturally feel much diffidence in offering to the reader any description of this part of Eastern Europe. I shall, in consequence, confine myself to a brief record of the impressions, the result of my sojourn in the immediate neigh-

bourhood; trusting that, by so doing, the view presented of the dominion of the Sultan, as it appeared in the year 1840, may possess some few features of interest.

The northern shore of the celebrated straits is of gradual ascent, with a few villages and cultivated spots, but the south side lies low. Sixteen miles from the entrance, and close to the water's edge, are the formidable castles mounting cannons of exceptionally large calibre, some of them firing stone shot twenty-six inches in diameter, which should prove almost impregnable. It was by these, that the British squadron under Admiral Sir John Duckworth was so seriously damaged when it came through the Dardanelles. Farther on, several towns and villages and occasional batteries are passed; but on rounding the next point the channel widens, and the whole country up to Gallipoli, situated at the north end of the straits on the European side, is considerably more cultivated. Gallipoli is a town of considerable importance, exporting large quantities of oil.

We sailed through the Sea of Marmora during the night, and at daybreak were abreast of the Seven Towers of Constantinople; the old state prison, with the Seraglio, lying to the eastward. Passing Seraglio Point, the great city with its mosques and minarets in every direction lay before

us. On the Asiatic shore are numerous palaces and many pretty houses with gardens sloping to the banks of the Bosphorus, and here is noticeable a large building, the barracks, most healthily situated. On the opposite shore the Seraglio with its white palace, decorated in the Eastern style, is seen through groves of cypress-trees, with great effect. Here the Golden Horn, an arm of the sea, extends several miles, and forms the most splendid harbour. In it the dockyard is situated. To the east is the small island on which stands Leander's Tower, and on the north shore rises Pera, the picturesqueness of which is complete in the numerous mosques with their domes and crescent-crowned minarets, relieved by the dark foliage of the intermingled trees. I may say, in passing, of the minarets—that the custom of calling the congregation to prayer from them, seems to me infinitely preferable, in point of noise, to the atrocious clanging of bells practised in Catholic countries.

On our arrival, it being calm and the current very strong, we were obliged to anchor at the entrance to the Bosphorus. But it was the reverse of a hardship, as it permitted us to watch a scene which, in motion and liveliness, is not to be equalled elsewhere. On all sides there was something to attract the eye. The slow-moving barges

afforded a striking contrast to the caiques which with inconceivable rapidity darted across the current here and there. Now might be seen some boat occupied by a sedate Turk and his family, the immovable countenance of the man as he smoked his pipe indicating an absolute abstraction from all surrounding life; then would swiftly pass a gilded caique with some minister of state lying in the stern, an umbrella held over him to protect him from the glare; whilst again, in another direction, would pass the Lord High Admiral (Captain-Pacha) in a very handsome boat manned English fashion, and with a guard of four soldiers.

When the sea-breeze rose we proceeded up the Bosphorus, and on passing on the European shore the Palace of Dohna-Batshé, where the Sultan usually resides, we fired a salute, instantly returned by a battery close by. Near the palace are some magnificent marble pillars of the Corinthian order. The palace itself, with the extensive views on the Bosphorus, is at first sight like a scene in fairy-land; and every reach of the channel has a palace either of the Sultan's, or of some one of the Pachas. The houses, indeed, are, as a rule, built of wood, and as fires are of frequent occurrence, they have seldom a long life. But, in spite of this, the Turks rebuild them in the same fashion; with at least one thing in favour of the practice—it adds consider-

ably to the revenue of the country, as the forests are Government property.

The Sweet Waters of Asia is a title given to a stream which flows through a very fertile valley distant some five miles from Pera. It is a favourite resort of the harems, not of the Sultan only, but of the Pachas—especially on Friday, the Mahomedan Sabbath. It was a Friday when we passed it, and the Sultan had just landed, his harem having preceded him. It will not do to say very much of the carriages; for though, as a rule, carved and gilded, it is not invidious to describe them as bullock-carts, both in form and method of draught—for horses are only occasionally used. I thought the features of the women remarkably good; but they looked pale, and the envious yashmac prevented anything being seen beyond eyes and hair. And, besides, there are the attending eunuchs, whose chief duty is to prevent any approach on the part of strangers; and thus one has to be content with a distant view of these Circassian beauties.

We anchored in the small harbour of Therapia, a village the usual resort of Europeans in summer, near which our ambassador was at the time residing. On the Sunday after our arrival, the Dowager Sultana, attended by many of the late Sultan's women and guarded by eunuchs, arrived in the royal carriages at a palace near the villa.

Her face was quite hidden by the yashmac. A few days afterwards we arranged a game of cricket in an extensive valley opposite Therapia, and whilst engaged in it, the Sultan himself, who had landed to visit a palace in the neighbourhood, came to see the game. We all drew up and took off our caps; and in return the sovereign fixed his gaze upon us, and did not remove it until he had passed—a very high compliment indeed in Turkey.

I took very particular notice of the Sultan on this occasion. He was then not nineteen years of age, but he certainly looked more like twenty-six. He had rather a long nose, small eyes, and was slightly marked with small-pox. He was of ordinary height, but rather thin; and if it be permitted to say so much of his sacred person, appeared to me to be rather weak on his legs. His dress was a double-breasted surtout coat of brown cloth, fez with blue tassel, an embroidered sword-belt with handsome sword, the clasp of the belt being studded with precious stones, and over all a blue cloak. A very handsome horse, splendidly caparisoned, but with an English saddle and bridle, was led after him. He appeared extremely affable to the vast number of attendants that accompanied him. After watching us, he proceeded to the landing-place about a quarter of a mile off, and there embarked in his caique. It was an extremely

beautiful boat, carved and gilded, with a bird on the bow, and manned by fourteen oarsmen. Its rate of going was wonderfully swift; and when it passed the *Talbot*, which did not omit to fire a royal salute, its pace was almost incredible—it seemed no sooner come than gone.

From the hill above the village of Therapia, a magnificent view is presented of the upper part of the Bosphorus, and of the entrance from the Black Sea. The beauty of the scene is not lessened by the variety which the landscape affords. The cultivated ground is dotted here and there with pretty villages, to which the numerous formidable forts seem to insure absolute protection. A very picturesque old Genoese castle on the Asiatic shore is not the least attractive feature in the scene.

On September 7th we proceeded to Topkana, and the next day we paid a visit to Stamboul itself, inhabited by the Turks only. The bazaars were naturally the first attraction. They are extensive, and the arrangement by which sections are devoted to one special trade—as, for example, where boots are sold nothing else can be had, and so on in the different articles—is eminently business-like. But these long streets of shops under a covered way, for they are nothing else, are not only very close, but must be extremely unwholesome.

From the Bazaar we proceeded to the Mauso-

leum, which is of small size and contains the remains of the late Sultan's grandfather, of his great-grandfather, of some of his wives, and of two of his sons. We were not allowed to do more than look through the windows; nevertheless I brought away a good notion of what the interior is like. I cannot better describe the tombs of the grandfather and great-grandfather, as they show above the floor, than by saying that their appearance is like that of a camel covered with costly Cashmere shawls and with its head adorned with a white turban and green feather. The length of each tomb is about twelve feet, width about six feet, and height eight feet. The tombs of the wives are small; they are covered with black velvet embroidered in gold, and have also Cashmere shawls, but no other distinction. Whilst two yet smaller tombs similarly covered, are those of the present Sultan's two brothers; these latter being distinguished by each having at one end a red cap with green feather—thus denoting the introduction, during the late Sultan's reign, of the fez in place of the unwieldy turban.

Crossing the Bosphorus, we visited Pera, chiefly inhabited by the Franks. I have already described the pleasing appearance of this suburb from the sea. But it is like too many Eastern towns—a fair shell with a rotten kernel. It is irregularly

built and filthy to a degree; especially the streets near the water's edge.

On the 15th September I was fortunate enough to be able to accompany a party from the Austrian Embassy to view the Seraglio, the grand entrance to which is at the point on the banks of the Bosphorus. It has two gates carved and gilded, and with Turkish hieroglyphics over them. The ambassadors, however, are received at another gateway, near to which, on the outside, is a building some fifty feet square and surrounded with screens. This place contains the divan used by the Sultan when he takes leave of the Captain Pacha of the fleet on the eve of any special expedition.

The first view after passing the gateway is not very inviting—a garden overrun with weeds; at least it was so at that time. From this, a pathway quite one thousand yards in length, shut in on either side by a wooden paling, leads through some of the offices of the domestics to the new part of the Seraglio. The entrance-hall, or waiting-room for the ambassadors, is some seventy feet by forty, and is covered with a white mat. Sofas and chairs are placed around it, and it is simplicity itself, except that the eye is attracted by the domelike painted ceiling and profusion of cornices, which in combination have a pleasing

effect. From this hall the grand reception room is reached. It is not so large, but is most handsomely furnished. Directly fronting the entrance is the Sultan's sofa, covered in embroidered silk velvet, and on either side of it a handsomely carved chair covered in silk, with velvet cushions embroidered in gold. Other sofas and chairs of various colours are placed around the room, and immense pier-glasses fill the spaces between the windows. The ceiling is similar to the one in the hall, but has the addition of a magnificent chandelier, and lamps between the windows. The carpet of this luxurious apartment, it need not be said, is a carpet, and as such beggars description.

From the grand reception room we passed into one of similar character described as the Circumcision room. From this, amongst other apartments, the six bedrooms of the Sultan's wives lead off. They are each about twenty feet by fifteen, and are fitted up very gaudily; the very common white covering of the wool mattresses notably excepted. Two other rooms, equal in size to these chambers, lead off from the Circumcision room from opposite corners. The one is the Sultan's private room, in which, in a case placed opposite the window so that the light may fall upon it, are kept the Sultan's swords, pistols, daggers, and

pipes, mostly thickly studded with precious stones. It boasts also a fine marble chimney-piece without a grate. The other room is the Sultan's library, with a fireplace but with very few books. Other doorways lead to baths fitted in the Turkish style for the Sultan and his wives. It need not be said that his is constructed in a very superior style to the others; having a marble font, the door covered with gilt, and communicating with other rooms fitted for the purpose of refreshment after the bath.

When we had completed our survey of this part, we were taken through a long gallery, the windows of which are grated so that the Sultan when he takes exercise in it (for this is its use) cannot be observed, to a smaller gallery containing rude drawings of ships and other things. I noticed amongst them, a picture of Lord Rodney's action. From this smaller gallery we crossed a pretty flower-garden to a smoking-room of peculiar construction. It has but one fixed side; the others having curtains only, which when drawn aside permit a full view of the Seraglio and grounds. Its contents were a few sofas and chairs; but under it there is a fountain with several cold shower-baths.

We walked through the garden to the old part of the Seraglio where are the stables, well kept, and the apartments of the eunuchs. The latter resemble barracks. Each eunuch, according

to his rank, has a certain space allotted to him, which is covered with matting. The bed-places are in three tiers, each about ten feet high; and from my experience I should doubt the effectiveness of the ventilation. We saw little more worthy of notice before leaving, except the library and a second reception room. In the former, numbers of Turkish books were lying about, and there was a large painting with the portraits of all the Sultans. The reception room contains the old throne, a sort of bedstead standing in the corner close to the wall, its foot-posts and side-pieces studded with precious stones, many of enormous size and value. On this the former Sultans used to receive the ambassadors, who were seated on a sofa in front of it. The room itself is some thirty feet by fifteen, and very dismal and dirty; but boasts a fireplace, the guard of which is of exquisite workmanship in gold and silver. The throne is placed in semi-obscurity. No doubt this was intentional, so that the face of the Sultan might not be clearly seen by the infidel visitors. The room has the additional notoriety of being the place from which have issued orders for the executions—not of tens, or hundreds, but of thousands. I should add that all the ceilings in the place are more or less adorned with paintings and covered in gilt with numberless Turkish characters.

From the Seraglio we passed on to the Mint, and from the latter place to the mosque where the ancient armour is kept. In the Mint we only saw the room where his Imperial Majesty's jewels are kept—amongst them a saddle-cloth embroidered with pearls of great size. Indeed, the place was hardly worth the visit; but not so the mosque, which, from the immense collection of arms—which includes suits of armour of the Knights of Malta and of the Caliphs of Rhodes, chain armour, brass and iron helmets, battle-axes, peculiar muskets, cutlasses, and yataghans—proved extremely interesting.

After a full inspection of the mosque we crossed the Bosphorus in a caique to Scutari, and paid a visit to the howling dervishes. To this sect of the Mahomedans the Sultan was attached. The room to which we were admitted is some thirty feet square, and is decorated with handcuffs and instruments of torture, cymbals, and tambourines, and, especially, with hats of conical shape, the distinctive badge of the sect. A railing round the room, within which the extraordinary worship, if worship it can be called, takes place, divides visitors from performers. The performance itself—which, of course, has been often described—is rather curious than interesting. Men of all conditions, first taking off their shoes, go to the

priest to receive his blessing, and having done so are permitted to kiss his hand. Then they kneel down and commence howling, making a most lamentable, not to say diabolical noise; and when they are tired of kneeling, they stand up and continue the same noise, swinging themselves to and fro until quite exhausted. Several of them fainted whilst we were there.

On the next Friday, which, as I have said, is the Mahomedan Sabbath, I had an excellent view of his Imperial Majesty on his way to the mosque, which was some five hundred yards only from the ship. It was the custom—in fact a duty—of the Sultan to attend all the mosques in the course of the year. We saw the royal caique proceed to the palace in the morning, and at noon the procession start. First came a carved and gilded caique, pulled by fourteen men, and bearing officers to clear the way; on this followed a larger caique most tastefully decorated, manned by twenty-six men, and having a canopy of crimson silk surmounted by a crescent, and at the extreme end a gilded dove—the latter a special signification of his Sublime Majesty's presence. His Majesty sat on a couch placed across the stern of the boat, having two high officers of state facing him. The next caique was one very similar in appearance, and contained the officers of state; whilst following it were

numerous smaller caiques with attendants. The bank of the Bosphorus, from the palace where the Sultan was residing to the mosque, was lined, without break, with troops and detachments of artillery, which saluted as the royal caique passed; and when his Majesty reached our ship we, in our turn, manned yards and gave him a royal salute. A large staff of officers, magnificently dressed, awaited the debarkation, and when the sovereign landed, bowed low before him; whilst one or two of the pachas ventured to approach him as he mounted his horse, to proceed, guarded by troops, to the mosque. His stay there was about two hours; and when he left he inspected the ordnance department, and from the latter place was taken in a remarkably swift caique up the Golden Horn to be present at the floating of a line-of-battle ship out of dock. His dress on this occasion was similar to the one he wore when he paid a visit to our cricket-field, with the addition of a magnificent order in diamonds.

The last object which had a special attraction for me during this visit to Constantinople was the Sultan's steam-yacht, then commanded by Captain John Ford. I went over it with much interest. It was fitted with great taste, and had every conceivable luxury in the cabins.

CHAPTER XII.

MASTER H.M.S. *TALBOT* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (*continued*), 1840.

Gulf of Moudanieh—Prince's Island—We embark Turkish troops—A dirty set—Beyrout—Intended attack on St. Jean d'Acre—Want of charts—I am detached to examine the anchorage—Entirely successful survey—Ordered to return—Arrival of the fleet before the fortress—Bombardment and capture of St. Jean d'Acre—On shore after the attack—Insignificant loss on our side.

FROM Constantinople we proceeded to the Gulf of Moudanieh, visiting Gemlik, the seaport of the flourishing town of Brussa. Gemlik is nothing but a collection of some five hundred miserable houses, hardly above huts, near the beach. From this we made for the Gulf of Ismid, near to which there is an arsenal where men-of-war are built. After a very brief return to Constantinople we went to the Prince's Islands and anchored there a few days. These islands are very picturesque, and in the hot season a famous health-resort of the inhabitants of the capital. This was the anchorage occupied by Sir John Duckworth during his negotiation with the Turks. It happened that on

our next return to the capital, a prince had just been born; and in honour of the event salutes were fired, and in the evening the Seraglio gate, the palace at the time occupied by the Sultan, and, as well, all the minarets, were very effectively and splendidly illuminated; the brilliant display being supplemented by all manner of fireworks.

On the 9th of October we received orders to embark Turkish troops for Syria, and sailed on the next evening with two hundred of them and their baggage for Beyrout, which we reached on the 21st. Our passage through the Archipelago had been rapid; but off the north-west part of the Island of Cyprus, a heavy gale caused us to ship tons of water, and so exhausted the troops that for a time we brought up at an anchorage inside the Island of Provencal, on the coast of Karamania. On our arrival, the Admiral commanding-in-chief, Honourable Robert Stopford, ordered the troops to be landed forthwith; and the order was not a little to our liking, for I may truly say that a dirtier set of fellows than those constituting our freight on this occasion, I never saw. The heat in Beyrout was quite overpowering. The situation of the town, on a promontory and close to the beach with groves of olive trees to set it off, and the mountains of Lebanon rising behind it, is extremely beautiful from the sea. The surrounding country is fertile;

but at this time, the attacks of Ibrahim Pacha and the excesses of his troops had caused many of the people to desert the villages. In fact, from this cause, and the never-ceasing conscription for the Egyptian army, the country was almost depopulated.

At this time, our Government had entered into an agreement with its allies to drive the Egyptian troops out of Syria. Beyrout itself had been bombarded and captured a few days before our arrival, and presented a most melancholy appearance in consequence.

It was now intended to attack the celebrated fortress of St. Jean d'Acre. There was a great want, at the time, of a good chart of this formidable place; and when the Admiral learned from his son that I was a surveying officer, the *Talbot* was ordered, in company with the Turkish flagship bearing the flag of Walker Pacha, to proceed to the place and examine the anchorage. When off Acre we met the squadron commanded by the Honourable Captain Waldegrave in H.M.S. *Revenge;* and when he found we had the Turkish Admiral with us, a conference was held and it was decided to summon the fortress. The Egyptians, however, refused to receive the flag of truce, and Captain Waldegrave in consequence decided to disperse the squadron; and the same evening

when at anchor we received orders to rejoin the Commander-in-Chief at Beyrout. There was of course no remedy but to comply, great as was my disappointment not to carry out the intention of our visit to the spot.

However, the next day we were more fortunate. We were working up past the fortress of Acre taking soundings, when at one o'clock in the afternoon, noticing that the *Revenge* was still in sight, I begged Captain Codrington to request permission to anchor, if only to be able to take angles to measure the fortress; for I thought it a great pity that having got so far, we should leave without doing something towards carrying out our very important object. His answer was: "My orders are to proceed to Beyrout, but I will hoist the signal." It is needless to say that my delight was great to find my application successful; for the required permission was given, and we anchored in nineteen fathoms, some mile and a half distant from the fortress. I started in a boat to commence the survey; and having passed, unmolested, within nine hundred yards of the batteries, formed a base by angles in connection with the second master on board the ship. He (Mr. Mainprise) then joined in the survey in another boat, and we were so extremely fortunate as to hit upon the two most important shoals off the west part of the

fortress. Captain Codrington, in the meantime, was away in his gig to reconnoitre, and we all returned on board at 5 o'clock, when sail was made, but there was scarcely any wind. The enemy during this time had not attempted to interfere with us, and probably concluded that we would sail so soon as the wind came off the land in the evening. But this was not our intention. Instead, at 10 P.M. when it was dark, Captain Codrington, accompanied by Lieutenant Codd, started in one boat to reconnoitre, whilst I took another with Mr. Mainprise, and sounded along the fortress up to the bridge.

We got on board again at two in the morning, and sailed at once for Beyrout; and having placed the soundings which the second master and myself had taken, with the angles, on paper, I handed them to the Captain, who on our arrival placed them in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. The Admiral ordered us to return at once and complete the survey; so on November 1st we were again off St. Jean d'Acre, when I proceeded in one boat, with Mr. Mainprise in another, and continued the survey day and night without intermission until completed, when two copies were made with directions for avoiding the shoals written out by myself, and these completed surveys were handed by Captain Codrington to the

Admiral on the arrival of the latter with the fleet.

When, on the 3rd of November, 1840, our ships were preparing for action, it was one of those serene mornings on which not a ripple disturbs the sea. On such a beautiful day we commenced with a force of six thousand men to attack the celebrated fortress which for two months had resisted the assaults of the great Bonaparte with thirty-five thousand men, the flower of his army, at his back.

The following is a brief account of my experience of an engagement which, though short, was so effective as to form one of the most memorable events in modern warfare.

At 9 A.M., a light breeze having sprung up from seaward, the signal was made for the fleet to weigh anchor. In a moment, by magic it would seem, the anchors were up and the ships crowded with sail, every one on board awaiting with impatience the moment to engage. But for some time we were fated to chafe with our quarry in view; for light and variable winds prevented our coming close until two o'clock in the afternoon. Then the welcome signal was made; and the anxiety to be at the enemy was very clearly shown by the manner in which the ships were put to it. The *Castor* frigate led in on the south side; and we in the *Talbot* had the satisfaction of being the

second ship to come to anchor. On the west side, the *Powerful*, Commodore Napier (the late Sir Charles Napier), led in.

For some time, before the vessels could anchor, the enemy had been having it pretty much their own way, firing freely at us without any reply; but when we were fairly in position the engagement became general, and the face of the fortress was often a magnificent sight—being, indeed, at times, one sheet of fire. At 4 P.M. a tremendous explosion was heard, and on looking at the fortress an immense volume of smoke appeared above it, which continued stationary for some time. It turned out that our fire had blown up the grand magazine, absolutely annihilating, in doing so, two regiments of infantry formed near it, about thirteen hundred strong; and, besides these, every living thing within a considerable area was blown into space, many camels and other animals included.

At 5.30 P.M. the signal was made to cease firing, for the fortress was silenced. We, nevertheless, kept prepared for another attack, but it was not required. And on the next morning, at daylight, when it had been intended to storm the place, it was found that the Egyptians had evacuated it in the night. Our marines with some Turkish troops were then landed to take possession of it; and so the bombardment ended.

We were unfortunate enough to lose Lieutenant Mesurier, a messmate of mine, who during the action was seriously wounded by a shot that cut our sheet cable. A piece of it struck him, crushing his watch perfectly flat. He lingered only till the next day, when he was buried with all honours near Mount Cœur de Lion. Another of our men had his arm shot off. He was captain of a gun, and, though on the sick-list, had with true British pluck desired not to lose the fun; and so had obtained the surgeon's permission to be at his post.

In the forenoon of the 4th I paid a visit to the fortress. I cannot pretend to attempt an accurate description of the scene. Dead bodies were lying in every direction, and with them an immense number of camels, horses, and donkeys, all huddled together. The castle and town were in ruins. So effective had our fire been, that when the poor inhabitants, who had left the place to be out of the way of the bombardment, returned, they were positively, in cases, unable to make out the site of their houses. Many of the Egyptian troops came over to the Sultan; and the total loss of life on their side was stated at three thousand men, besides a large number of prisoners.

On our side, the ships in the combined fleet (for so it must be called, as, besides our own,

two Austrian vessels and one Turkish, were engaged) suffered very little. Fortunately for us, the guns of the fortress had been levelled too high. The principal damage was, therefore, to masts and rigging; and this we at once set about to repair. On the Sunday following an order was issued for a thanksgiving on board all the ships for this miraculous escape.

We received one hundred of the principal prisoners on board the *Talbot;* and on the 7th of November sailed with them for Constantinople.

CHAPTER XIII.

MASTER H.M.S. *TALBOT* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (*continued*), 1840-1.

Rhodes—Snowstorm and severe gale at Constantinople—Madame Ralli's ball; profusion of jewelry—Decline appointment in the Turkish Navy—Letter from Sir Baldwin Walker—Procession of the Bairam—Story of the Bairam—Amateur butchers—The dancing dervishes—Examples of Mahomedan superstition—Thanked by the Austrian Danube Steam Co.—My survey of St. Jean d'Acre acknowledged by the Admiralty—Captain Codrington leaves us—Conduct the Lord High Commissioner and Admiral Stopford to Butrinto.

ON our way to Constantinople with our prisoners we stood near to Rhodes, and communicated with the city, where I was fortunate enough to go ashore. The site of the city is to the extreme north of the island; and from some distance at sea the apparent solidity of the walls, with the towers set upon elevated rocks, cannot fail to create a sense of the strength and grandeur of this ancient place. But on landing, although there are vestiges of its former importance, they are vestiges and nothing more—little is found to confirm the notion which a first view gives. Of all the immense temples,

porticos, statues, theatres, paintings, the Colossus itself, nothing remains. The visitor must be content, as we had to be, to have the spots where once they stood pointed out to him. It is true that the Church of St. John and one other, with a convent and the palace of the Grand Master, still exist; but as the churches are now mosques we were unable to enter them. Some portions of the residences of the caliphs still stand, and on them may be deciphered the coats of arms, executed in marble, of the different personages. The ancient walls erected by the Knights of Malta also still remain, and evidence their original strength, for we walked round them; but when these have been enumerated there is nothing else. The streets, formerly laid out on so magnificent a scale, are quite dilapidated, and the city itself does not occupy one-fourth of its former space. On the slope of the neighbouring hills stand the residences of the well-to-do, surrounded by high cultivation, and, indeed, most beautifully situated. Altogether the island, in point of beauty and fertility, sustains its reputation. In this respect, at least, it bears the palm from all I visited in the Archipelago.

During the night after we left, a gale came on which compelled us to anchor at the Island of Kos, off the town. The country around struck me as

being very fertile. On reaching our destination on November 21st, and getting rid of our prisoners, we proceeded to the Golden Horn, and, off the dockyard there, set to work to repair the damages received in the action at Acre. A few days afterward (November 30th) a tremendous fall of snow took place. It completely changed the face of the whole country, being in some places six feet deep. On this followed a very severe gale from the N.W., which caused great destruction to the shipping, both in the Archipelago and on the coast of Syria. H.M. brig *Zebra* was totally wrecked at Kiaffa, and H.M. frigate *Pique* had a very narrow escape; many merchant vessels were never heard of again, and one of the Royal Austrian Danube steamers, proceeding from Constantinople with six hundred troops on board, was blown on shore at the entrance to the Gulf of Moudanieh—numbers of the soldiers perishing, not from the sea, but from the intense cold.

During this visit to Constantinople I attended a notable ball given by Madame Ralli, the wife of a Greek merchant, at which all the ambassadors with their suites, and many pachas, were present. It was a grand affair. The Armenian and Greek ladies made a great show; the superbness of their dress astonishing every one. It would seem, indeed, that each lady had tried to outdo the other

in profusion of precious stones and ornaments. The hostess was an exception in this one respect. She did not exhibit the same excess of jewelry; but she nevertheless looked very well, being an exceedingly handsome woman, and remarkably well dressed. The place was got up exquisitely. There was snow outside, it is true; but in contrast to it, the staircase was lined with choice exotics. Nor did the splendour destroy the fun, for we danced till midnight.

At this time the Captain Pacha made me the offer of an appointment in the Turkish navy. It was important enough to make me desire to communicate with Admiral Sir Baldwin Walker. I wrote to him, and on receipt of his reply, and after consulting with a friend at the embassy, decided to decline the appointment.

The following is Sir Baldwin's letter:—

"MAHMOUDIE-LAMPSAKI,
"*15th February*, 1841.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the second instant, in reply to which I beg to inform you that I have written to the Captain Pacha on the subject of your joining the Turkish service, as also three warrant officers; but as there are several points which I think it but fair,

for all parties, should be clearly understood previous to a final decision, I have mentioned to his Highness that I should wish to converse with him, on several particulars, before coming to any definite arrangements. And as there is every prospect of my arriving at Constantinople before the departure of the *Talbot*, I trust you will suffer no inconvenience from so short a delay.

"I remain, dear Sir, yours very truly,

"BALDWIN W. WALKER.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,

"H.M. Ship *Talbot*."

During this visit I witnessed the religious procession of the Bairam. It commenced on the 2nd of March, 1841, when several of us started early in the morning to view it. Arriving at the gate of the Seraglio, we found crowds already assembled, with a large body of troops, the latter accompanied by their bands. The military lined the road from this point to the Mosque of Achmet VI., the one which the Sultan was to attend.

At half-past seven, when all was excitement, an officer rode out from the Seraglio gate to announce that the procession was on the move, and presently it appeared. It was headed by several mounted army officers, two and two. Then came ten of the Sultan's horses, led by grooms.

The animals were splendidly caparisoned: the velvet saddle-cloths, of different colours, were embroidered in gold and silver and bore the arms of the Sublime Porte set in diamonds and large pearls; the stirrups were of solid gold, the bridles ornamented with gold and precious stones, whilst the head of each animal was set off with feathers, and the forehead adorned with a large emerald. After these came several pachas, admirals, and generals, all on horseback and two and two; and then another ten led-horses similar in equipment to those described. On these followed the ministers on horseback and attended; after them some thirty captains in the navy on foot, forming a line on either side, and then his Sublime Majesty on a charger magnificently equipped; the whole being brought up by a number of mounted officers. The Sultan wore a fez with a small feather, and an order in diamonds, and a cloak. He was closely surrounded during his progress by the imperial guard, some fifty strong, who marched on foot. They wore blue surtout coats and trousers embroidered with gold lace, upright caps with each a plume of peacock's feathers hanging forward in the form of a crescent, and carried small battle-axes and swords. The whole had a very good effect. When the Sultan, dismounting, entered the mosque, all who could followed him. His stay

was about half an hour, when the procession reformed as before, and returned.

The Mahomedan story of the festival of the Bairam differs somewhat from the Jewish records, and is as follows: When the patriarch Ibrahim found himself childless, he made a solemn vow that if he should be blessed with a son, he would immolate that son as a sacrifice to the Lord. He was heard, and had two sons; the first, Ismael, by his bondwoman Hadgie; the second, Isshak, by his wife Sarah. In his happiness in the possession of these children, he for a time forgot his vow. But at length being thrice in dreams reminded of it, he took his eldest son, the lad Ismael, to the top of Mount Mlina with the intention of fulfilling his promise. Tied hand and foot, his neck bared, and thrown upon the ground, the youth lay ready for the sacrifice, when in the very act of immolation the knife in Ibrahim's hand refused to act. The victim then spoke out, declaring that the supreme sacrifice was not required; that the Lord was well pleased, and would provide a sacrifice acceptable to Himself: and behold a ram came down from heaven for the purpose, and was slaughtered in place of Ismael.

This happened on the tenth day of the last month of the Arab year; and the commemoration

has ever since been strictly observed, the finest sheep that can be procured being brought to the knife on the occasion. In fact, the custom leads to the practice of a good deal of what may fairly be termed amateur butchery. The Sultan himself leads the way. On his return from the mosque he is supposed to kill a vast quantity of sheep, as many, it is said, as three or four hundred. This is the theory; but in practice, I believe, he actually does operate upon three or four of the number, and deputes the chief Eunuch—who is by prescription esteemed a personage of most exemplary piety—to slaughter the remainder. The pachas and principal men also, at the conclusion of the procession, kill a quantity of sheep, according to the number of their respective families.

I have already described the performance of the Howling Dervishes. It was now my good fortune to be present at that of their dancing brethren—an entertainment or service, whichever it may be called, at which the Sultan generally attends after going to the mosque. The scene is a small mosque, free to any one of the male sex. It is fitted up with a gallery. The centre is formed into a circle, in which the performance takes place. The priests are seated at the upper part of it, on a prayer-carpet; the performers wear cloaks and white beaver sugar-loaf hats. Some music not

unlike the bag-pipes starts the whole; and this is at times interrupted by a noise like singing—said to be praying. At a certain sound of the music, the whole prostrate themselves for a few seconds. When they rise, they proceed round and round the circle, and each time, as they pass the prayer-carpet, salute it in a very solemn, not to say peculiar, fashion; somewhat in this way—on coming near they bow to it; taking a waltz step they face it; and then when the other side is reached, they bow again, and start off round the circle as before. When they have had enough of this, or at a given time, as may be, they stop at their original places and remain motionless until the music commences. Then throwing off their cloaks, they pass the priest, kiss his hand, and start dancing. They dance round and round continually, with one leg kept at a certain position on the floor, and their arms fully extended but almost perpendicularly, the right arm pointing up, the left down. Their dress when uncloaked is, generally, a green jacket with a gown under it. The latter is made very full, and is therefore very effective in appearance during the dancing; for as they turn round it forms a circle such as the hoops worn by ladies in old days used to form in the minuet. There were some thirty performers, and some of them fell down from fatigue. When this happens, they are

at once covered with a cloak, and removed from the circle.

Such as I have described, are some of their religious ceremonies; and I may now not unfitly say something of my experience of their superstitions.

When the fleet, on its return from sea, was entering the Bosphorus, the Captain Pacha came to pay a visit to it. When he arrived alongside the Admiral's flagship, it was naturally expected that he would at once come on board. But instead the great man consulted his watch and observed: "The propitious hour has not yet arrived." And sure enough he would not come on board until the certain auspicious moment. In another case, when the Turkish government were about to build a frigate, and every preparation had been made by the Captain Pacha for laying the keel, the astrologers were pleased to announce that the propitious time had not yet come; and in consequence there was a delay of several days. It was ultimately laid on the 20th of March in the dockyard, and close to the spot where we were employed in heaving up the Royal Danube steamer *Seri Privas* for repairs, which fact led to a curious manifestation of their solid belief in these superstitions. The vessel on which we were employed was the same which I have mentioned as having

been blown ashore at the entrance to the Gulf of Moudanieh. The engines had been removed and the wreck towed to Constantinople. When she arrived we erected ways and hove her on shore; but it proved a work of very great difficulty, and we had only just succeeded in carrying it out on the day when the laying of the frigate's keel was completed—in fact, on the previous day we had so utterly failed, that for the moment it was almost resolved to give up the attempt. When the Captain Pacha heard of the coincidence, he gravely observed, with the solemnity at all events of an absolute believer, that "the Astrologers were right; the propitious time had not yet come."

In consequence of our success, the Royal Austrian Danube Steam Company presented me with a gold watch accompanied by the following letter:—

"CONSTANTINOPLE, *24th March*, 1841.

"SIR,

"We do ourselves the pleasure on behalf of the Imperial and Royal Danube Steam Company of Vienna to express to you our sincere thanks for your very kind attention, and the efficient assistance you have rendered during the late operation of heaving up the Steamer *Seri Privas* belonging to the Company.

"As a mark of our esteem and gratitude, we

request you to do us the favour of accepting the accompanying gold watch, and at the same time to be assured that we shall always feel pleasure in having an opportunity of rendering you or any of the gentlemen of Her Majesty's Navy who may be on the Station every service in our power to make their residence here agreeable.

"We remain, Sir, very truly yours,

"HAYES LA FONTAINE & CO.

"Mr. G. Biddlecombe, Master R.N.

"H.M. Ship *Talbot*."

Shortly afterwards, the published copy of my survey of the shoals at St. Jean d'Acre was sent me overland by the Hydrographer of the Admiralty, with the following :—

"ADMIRALTY, 30*th January*, 1841.

"SIR,

"I have the pleasure of sending you a copy of your satisfactory sketch of the bay and banks of Acre, and you shall have some more by the first man-of-war. I wish you had ascertained the breadth of the bank there, that is to say, to one hundred fathoms.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"F. BEAUFORT, Hydrographer.

"Mr. G. Biddlecombe, Master,

"H.M. Ship *Talbot*."

We left Constantinople on the 26th of March, and proceeded to Marmorice, on the coast of Karamania, where the squadron under Admiral Sir John Ommaney was lying. The harbour is spacious and has fine mountain scenery; but it is a poor place for supplies beyond water, which is good and plentiful. The Admiral, wishing to know something of the harbour of Karagatch, which lies a little to the eastward, ordered several masters in the fleet to examine it. I accompanied the Admiral in the steamer. As for the harbour, it is spacious, and a fleet might well water there; but this is all, for water seemed the extent of the available supplies. Returning to Marmorice, we sailed next day for Corfu, examining many anchorages on our way. On our arrival, we were placed in quarantine; and to our regret learned that we were to lose Captain Codrington. He had been appointed to his father's flagship, the *Queen*, at Portsmouth. When he left, I can safely say, his loss was felt by every one on board, officers and men alike.

From Corfu we proceeded to Malta, where we had again to go through quarantine. Here Captain Robert F. Stopford took command of the ship, and we returned to Corfu in company of the *Princess Charlotte*, bearing the flag of the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral the Honourable Robert

Stopford. When we arrived at Corfu, the Admiral was invested with the Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George, and on the occasion the garrison gave a grand picnic to him and to the officers of the fleet. It was got up with great foresight and taste, and, the weather being propitious, was altogether a notable success. Whilst here, the Lord High Commissioner, accompanied by the Admiral and suite, made a trip to Butrinto, and through the North Channel, so as to view the northern part of the Island of Corfu. H.M. steamer *Cyclops*, Captain Horatio T. Austin, took them, and as it happened that I had surveyed that part of the coast, it fell to me to attend them and conduct the vessel.

On the 6th of June we sailed on our return to Malta.

CHAPTER XIV.

MASTER H.M.S. *TALBOT* IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (*continued*), 1841-2.

The Admiralty order me to survey the Keith and Skerki shoals—Preparations—The Faro of Messina again—Palermo; the observatory; the palace chapel—Survey commenced—Driven back to Palermo—The Marina—Festival of St. Rosalia—The legend—Complete the survey—Messina—Festival of St. Magdalen; barbarous proceedings—Reggio—Send survey to the Admiralty—Letter of approval—Melancholy aspect of Syracuse—Ravages of fire at Smyrna—Rhodosto—Survey the coast opposite Gallipoli—Ismid—An exercise of faith—Franked by the Austrian Danube Co.'s steamers—Amaserah—Sinope—Samsun—Trebizond—A ride towards Erzeroum—Varna—Candia—Return to England—Death of my brother—Cruise in the Channel—Pass as master of a third-rate—Am laid up—Receive Turkish medal for St. Jean d'Acre—Letters from the Admiralty.

WHILST we were at Malta an order came from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I was to be employed in the survey of the Keith and Skerki shoals.

It was arranged that the *Talbot* should take the chronometers for determining the longitude; and that the *Hecate* and *Locust* should assist in the survey. I considered myself particularly fortunate in getting an old messmate of mine, Mr. Frederick

Robinson, to join me. He and I had been together in the *Ætna*, and he was now serving as mate in H.M. steamer *Cyclops*, and when I asked him to help me in the survey he at once acquiesced. When the beacons and other necessary gear were in readiness we started, sailing from Malta on the 19th of June, 1841, and entering the Faro of Messina, anchored for a few hours off the city.

The reader will think that I am entirely lost in love of the scenery in this part of the world; and perhaps it is so. At least I cannot help again recording the impression left upon my mind on this occasion when we ascended a hill which commanded a full view of the Faro—the city of Messina and Mount Ætna on one side; Mount Stromboli on the other; with the picturesque country of Calabria facing us.

We sailed on the same night for Palermo, where we arrived on the 27th, and here I went to the famed Royal Observatory in order to make the necessary observations for carrying the meridian of longitude to the Skerki Shoals. I found the astronomer most willing to give us every assistance, and the instruments extremely good. The observatory is situated a short distance above the palace, and is particularly celebrated from the fact that the planet Ceres was discovered from it.

There is a good bird's-eye view to be obtained from it, of Palermo with its bay, and Mount Pellegrino.

On my way to the observatory I availed myself of a chance that offered to go through the palace. It is gorgeously fitted up; but what most took my attention was the private chapel, which is really exquisite in its way. Between the windows, on the same floor as the chapel, but outside of it, are life-size figures of scriptural subjects in coloured mosaic work. On the doors, which are of oak, are elaborately carved scriptural scenes: amongst them our Saviour bearing the Cross; our Saviour being taken down from the Cross, and others: the expression given to the countenances in all being perfect. The pillars of the chapel are covered with most elaborate mosaic work, and the figures are life-size. But above everything I was struck with the dome over the altar-piece, with a representation of our Saviour in the centre. I feel, indeed, that it is quite beyond any description that I could attempt. I can only say for my own part that my admiration was so great that I never missed visiting the chapel whenever I went to the observatory; and on each occasion came away with a renewed feeling of gratification.

When the observations were concluded, we proceeded to sea, and on the passage to the Skerki Shoals I accompanied Captain Stopford in the

Hecate to Trapani, on the north-west coast of Sicily. Our object was to get some information concerning the shoals; but we were disappointed, for the fishermen were all away, and we learned nothing. On making our destination, we commenced the survey by anchoring the *Talbot* about five miles from the rocks. I then took the *Hecate*, and Mr. Robinson the *Locust*, to sound; but we had only been at the work a few days when the weather became so unfavourable that there was nothing for it but to run back to Palermo for shelter.

The city of Palermo stands in a deep bay, with high land behind it. Near the beach is the magnificent parade called the Marina, from which fine sea views can be obtained. It is three miles in length, and six carriages can drive abreast along it. The city also boasts a cathedral, and has fine botanical gardens at some little distance out, which are much frequented.

We were fortunate in the time of our arrival, for the festival of the patron saint, Rosalia, was just commencing. It is a celebration held in wide esteem, and people from all parts of the continent flock to see it, sleeping-room being at a high premium during its continuance. It is said that £5,000 are given annually towards the performance, the chief features of which I will venture to recapitulate.

On the promenade, booths are erected at different places, at which at ten o'clock at night bands of music commence playing, and keep on until two or three o'clock in the morning; horse-guards meantime patrolling the whole length of the parade. A scaffolding some hundred feet in height, an excellent representation of a cathedral, is erected, also on the promenade, and adorned in front with paintings of scriptural subjects, which when illuminated show the form of the structure as if by magic. Rockets and fireworks of every description are let off, and an excellent band, numbering not less than sixty performers, starts playing; the whole having a striking effect upon the spectators. Opposite this illuminated structure, a triumphal car, eighty feet in height, was erected on wheels. It bore a figure of the patron saint on the lower part, and of the Virgin Mary on the upper; whilst secured to a frame fashioned like the vanes of a windmill, which is turned by machinery, were full-sized figures of angels, cherubim, and seraphim. The car is lighted up, and the framework being set going, is drawn by bullocks through the principal streets, which are illuminated also.

The festival continues for five nights. The botanical gardens were illuminated, and crowded with people promenading throughout the night;

but as a rule in the daytime but few people were to be seen, because of the excessive heat. Balls are given every night by some of the nobility. On one evening the cathedral itself is illuminated in the interior, with ten thousand lights; and the patron saint in a silver coffin is taken out of it, and passes in procession with the whole of the clergy, and at the conclusion is returned to its sepulchre to await the next anniversary. On three days, there are horse-races in the principal street, which is a mile and a half long, some fifty feet wide, and paved with flat stones; the residences on either side being palaces. The horses are assembled at one end of the street, and at a given signal their bridles are removed and they are started off riderless, like so many wild horses, to the other end, a pair of spurs being, moreover, fastened to the flank so as to urge them more furiously on their course. They are brought up by a canvas screen stretched across the street in front of the palace which terminates it; but even so, they very often fall and cut themselves frightfully, and sometimes are killed. Nor is the danger confined to these unintelligent performers. It is true that barriers are placed on each side of the street, to give space for the foot-people. But numbers are killed every year, the occurrence being so much a matter of course, that it may be taken as an integral part of the

exhibition. Thieves abound here as elsewhere on similar occasions, and were kind enough to relieve me of my gold chain and watch-key. I should mention that I was much taken with the appearance of the ladies, whom I had the opportunity of observing at the balls, to all of which we were invited. They are generally of good figure, and were to my mind dressed with excellent taste, and with an absence of the profusion of jewellery so noticeable in other places.

The history of the patron saint is the following:— A young lady of extreme beauty, both of form and face, was doomed by her parents to be married to a man whom she detested. Sooner than submit to this cruelty, she fled from Palermo, and found a retreat in a cave near the summit of Mount Pellegrino; and there she remained until her death. She had been there several years, before her asylum was discovered; and when her friends did find her, she absolutely refused to leave the spot. After her death, a story was put about that during her repose she had been visited by some heavenly being; and, as a matter of course, she thereupon became a saint. Indeed, so strong was the popular belief in her sanctity that when, subsequently, the island of Sicily was visited with the plague, her remains were brought from the mountain to the city; and as the plague

shortly after disappeared, she was safe to exist in the strict odour of saintship for evermore. Her body was placed in a silver coffin, and a sepulchre built for it in the cathedral, where it now reposes as has been told. And moreover, a road to the top of Mount Pellegrino has with great labour been constructed, as a further memorial of her virtues.

On the 7th August we were able to return to our work; and when I had completed the survey of the Skerki Shoals, I took the *Hecate* to examine a shoal that I had discovered a few days previously; the *Talbot* and *Locust*, meantime, proceeding to Messina, where, when I had done what I wanted, I joined them with the *Hecate*, going inside the mole.

Here, also, where we stayed until the 18th of August, the annual festa took place, very similar to the one at Palermo already described, except as regards the car. At Messina, men instead of bullocks were used for draught, and living persons took the place of figures. A girl of twelve or fourteen was placed at the top to represent their saint, the Magdalen, and children from one to three years old stood for the other figures. The younger children, representing the cherubim, were lashed to the vanes, which, windmill fashion, were turned round in an incredible manner; so swiftly, indeed, that some of the children were taken down actually

lifeless. As a rule doses of laudanum are administered before the exhibition to induce sleep. It seems hardly credible that in a country claiming to be civilised, barbarity such as this, which indeed may be likened to the Indian Juggernaut, should be practised. But the natives, even of the highest classes, accept the custom with equanimity. Indeed, when I asked one Sicilian lady why they permitted such enormities, she, shrugging her shoulders, coolly replied: "Oh! there is no fear. It has been performed for ages, and the populace would be annoyed, were it discontinued."

I took the opportunity whilst here to cross over to Reggio, on the opposite shore, a place that has suffered very greatly from earthquakes; in fact, whilst we were on the spot a slight shock occurred. We were occupied at Messina in making fair copies of the survey; and in addition I wrote full explanatory remarks on the navigation of the locality, the whole being forwarded to the Admiralty. I was quite satisfied with our work. The survey comprised an area of forty-six miles in length by ten miles in breadth, and satisfactorily established the position of the Skerki Shoals, as well as of several previously unknown patches. It was, moreover, satisfactory to find that what we had done was approved at home: for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty were pleased to express their

approbation of my individual services in the following manner :—

"H.M.S. 'TALBOT,' 15*th October*, 1841.

"SIR,

"In compliance with instructions from the Commander-in-Chief, I have to acquaint you that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have expressed their approbation of the skill and diligence lately displayed by you whilst employed on the survey of the Skerki Shoals.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"Signed, ROBT. F. STOPFORD, Captain.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,

"Master, H.M.S. *Talbot.*"

"ADMIRALTY, 13*th September*, 1841.

"SIR,

"The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having authorised your being paid £12 5*s.* as assistant surveyor from the 27th of June to the 14th of August, 1841, at the rate of 5*s.* a day, I have to acquaint you that you may draw for that sum on the accompanying form.

"Signed, J. T. BRIGGS,

"Accountant-General.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,

"Master, H.M.S. *Talbot.*"

At Malta, to which we returned when we left Messina, we received orders to prepare for another trip to Constantinople, and sailed for the latter place on 1st September. We touched *en route* at Syracuse for water, and thus had a chance of seeing this harbour, so celebrated for its beauty. But there is something melancholy in a visit to a spot which is so essentially but the evidence of former greatness. Syracuse was once the capital of Sicily; the circuit of its walls was twenty miles, its population close upon half a million. Now, it contains but fourteen thousand inhabitants. The streets, though narrow, are regular; and in the environs, vestiges of its ancient grandeur can be seen in the remains of the tombs, prisons, theatre, aqueduct, catacombs, and the walls. The impression made upon me by the visit was very marked. I do not know where a more notable example may be found of decay arising from neglect by the central government. There can be no doubt that the natural resources of the place are vast. But the extensive harbour is gradually closing by the silting of the mud from the several rivers that flow into it; and the beautiful plains, once so productive, are now worse than useless, for they are become stagnant water-places, and by their effluvia have turned a healthy resort into a fever den. It is no wonder that the unfortunate people

are thoroughly discouraged by the utter neglect of all precautions for their benefit. In 1798, Lord Nelson, when pursuing the French fleet, came in here for supplies; and it is difficult to imagine how he did so, for had it happened forty years later, he would have obtained nothing but water and a few vegetables—bread even being a rare commodity.

Proceeding to Smyrna, we stayed there a few hours, and so could contemplate the ravages made by a recent fire. It must have been awful. Three thousand houses were destroyed, and twenty thousand persons left not only without a home, but without anything to eat. Liberal subscriptions had been raised, but there must have been something wrong about it; for when we arrived, although some months had elapsed, many families were still without any shelter whatever from the inclemency of the weather.

On December 23rd we reached Constantinople; and two days afterwards I proceeded in a merchant steamer to the town of Rhodosto, on the north-west shore of the Sea of Marmora. This is a place of some importance, and has wharfs extending into the sea for the landing of goods. Koshrew Pacha, late Vizier of Turkey, was at the time residing there in exile. After a few hours' stay I took the steamer on to Gallipoli, and there engaged a Turkish boat's crew, and with them crossed to

the old lighthouse on the Asiatic side for the purpose of surveying the extensive shoals along that coast. This was an important duty, because vessels are constantly getting on shore here, and are sometimes wrecked. When I had completed the survey I paid a visit to Khardi-Kio, the neighbourhood pleasing me from its high cultivation. From this I returned to Constantinople.

My next trip was also in a merchant steamer, and this time to Ismid, at the head of the Gulf of Nicomedeia. The town rises gradually from the water's edge to the height of about seven hundred feet, and entirely covers the southern face of a circular hill, on the summit of which are the remains of a castle, the walls some twenty feet thick, and no doubt the work of the Romans. The position completely commands the town. The arsenal lies opposite.

Ismid is the cleanest Turkish town I have ever visited. The houses are detached and have pretty gardens. The supplies of meat, vegetables, and water are good. Sheep in numbers are grazed round about; they are of the broad-tailed breed, and are better here than in any other part of Turkey. A little to the west stands a small church surrounded by a wall. It is the chapel used by the Christians in the locality, and is evidently very ancient. Under the altar-piece lie the remains of

the patron saint, Pantaleon; and I had the curiosity to descend into the vault to inspect them—or, I should perhaps say, what represents them. A large marble slab, destitute of inscription, covers the spot; and a hole has been opened near the side of it for the express purpose of taking out the ashes of the saint. It requires, I should think, a considerable exercise of faith; but at all events those who can bring themselves to believe, have the satisfaction of being told that their sins are remitted. Over the inner door is a painting representing the Resurrection, when earth and sea shall give up their dead. The plains of Nicomedeia are very extensive, and the surrounding mountains are luxuriant in fine forests of oak and beech. Altogether a trip to the top of the hill was well repaid. For not only does one obtain magnificent views of the surrounding scenery, but one cannot help remembering that the plains below have often been converted into battle-fields, and especially, that here is the spot where Diocletian, in the year two hundred and seventy or thereabouts, assembled an army of six hundred thousand men.

In consideration of the services I had rendered to shipping by my survey of the shoals off Gallipoli and in the Sea of Marmora, the Austrian Danube Steam Company gave me a franked letter for a free passage in any of their ships. And as

one of their vessels was just then leaving for the Black Sea, I obtained Captain Stopford's leave to go in her, and also to take with me my messmate, Lieutenant Suther, R.M.

The lighthouses to the northern extreme of the Bosphorus passed, we were in the Black Sea, in which no war-vessels except Russian and Turkish were allowed to cruise. Turning east, the coast is high until Cape Kerempeh is reached, from which place to Penderekli, which is only of importance because vessels of war are built there, it lies very low, and several small rivers here debouch. We saw the ruins of the town of Amaserah, and had a fine view of Mount Sayra, portion of which sank in the eruption of 1825. The appearance is exactly as if half the mountain had been cut away, leaving a perpendicular face to the northward. The landslip was as much as fifteen hundred feet in fall. A few miles east of the town, on a hill, is the palace of a Pacha, apparently in good repair, and which was inhabited for some years. The country seemed well cultivated. Continuing on to Cape Injeh the shore is moderately high, with plenty of wood, and shows here and there patches of maize near the villages. Except Ineboli, which indeed is fast going to ruin, there is nothing of interest in this part until the Cape is passed, when a bold peninsula comes in view, inside of which is

the extensive bay of Sinope, well known as being, amongst other things, the best anchorage on the south coast of the Black Sea. Some of the finest war-vessels have been built here; but the town of Sinope is a miserable place, and except water, all supplies were very limited. The extensive fortifications were in ruins, and save timber the exports insignificant. But the place was no doubt, in consequence of the introduction of regular steamers along the coast from Constantinople, on the way to improvement.

The country from Sinope to Samsun, though generally low, is thickly wooded. Cape Samsun is a conspicuous object by reason of two clumps of trees, like haycocks, on the rising ground at the back of the town. To the east of the latter, which is situated on the bight of a bay, are the ruins of an old fortification. The town, which is very small, is very unhealthy because of the surrounding swamps. A heavy swell is, as a rule, setting on the shore, and the landing therefore difficult; but the boatmen are very expert, and ship goods safely—the exports consisting of tobacco and raw silk for Constantinople. In fact, the resources of the place are very considerable, and it might soon rise to importance were the inhabitants more energetic.

From this place for some distance towards

Trebizond the navigation is difficult on account of the fogs exhaled from the low-lying thick forests; but as Trebizond is reached the shore becomes bolder, and the scenery near the town is picturesque, being well wooded, with several villages, surrounded by well-cultivated land. Trebizond is the principal port on the coast, and since the Danube Company had started a weekly steam communication with Constantinople, the trade was increasing, and might quickly have risen in importance had it not been for the apathy of the Turks. To the north-west, certainly, there is a battery for the protection of the Custom House, but the mole was a ruin and the embarkation of goods a matter of great risk. The exports were some forty thousand bales, annually, of raw silk, hides, &c.; and the imports an equal number of bales of British goods for Persia and Asia Minor. The town, which is extensive, is divided into two parts, the Turkish and Frank. The former is surrounded by a high wall, with a citadel almost in ruins; the Frank town lies to the west, and here the consuls reside.

Mr. Stevens, H.B.M. Consul, put himself to considerable trouble to enable us to ride into the interior towards Erzeroum, and so see something of the neighbourhood. Steep mountains, deep ravines, and excellent timber, are the features of

the country, which is grand in the extreme. The locality is very thinly peopled, and the roads, which are excavated in the sides of the hill, are often very rough and in consequence dangerous; but the horses, shod with a piece of flat iron covering the hoof entirely, are very surefooted, and a slip or fall is the exception. At the extreme point of Cape Trebizond a handsome palace had been built some years before by a Pacha—so grand indeed that the Sultan, judging it to be formidable, ordered its demolishment, and its remains are now used as the Quarantine station. Goods from the interior are brought by cattle. They are unloaded in an open field about a mile from the town, where the cattle are kept in quarantine, the goods being brought to the stores. In the rare event of there being no return cargo, the cattle go back at once. Two months in the winter excepted, the climate is as a rule mild; and in the neighbourhood are many beautiful gardens.

On our return, Mr. Suther, who had been appointed H.M. Consul at Cæsarea, left us at Samsun. We reached Constantinople at the end of January, 1842. Mr. Outram, a director of the Danube Steam Company, was about to proceed in one of their vessels to Varna, and invited me to go with him, and I gladly did so to have the chance of seeing this shore of the Black Sea. When we left,

the weather was fine but intensely cold, the Balkans and much of the coast being covered with snow. We passed close to Cape Emineh, the termination of the Balkan range, a bold and irregular promontory. But there was nothing more to be seen, a few villages excepted, until we reached Varna, which is situated on the north-west of an extensive bay. The entrance to the town is through a gateway protected by several pieces of artillery. The place is encircled with a wall ten feet high, loopholed for musketry only; but there are three redoubts, each mounting eight or ten guns, situated at the east, south-east, and south respectively. These redoubts command the anchorage, which is perfectly open and very unsafe, for the mole, extending some one hundred and fifty feet into the sea, is built of wood. The exports are chiefly tallow and poultry. The pacha's palace is in the centre of the town, and there are large barracks towards the west; but most of the other houses are built of wood, very low and tiled, and I can safely say that the streets are more filthy than any I have ever traversed.

The anchorage is so unsafe that when a gale from the north-east set in, we at once started on our return to Constantinople; and at the entrance of the Bosphorus had ample evidence of the ex-

tent of the snowfall. Not only was the whole country covered, but masses of snow hung about the lighthouse, so that the lights were not distinguishable. The *Talbot* was now ordered to Malta, and we sailed for that place on February 13th, anchoring for a day on our way in the Bay of Suda, the principal harbour of the Island of Candia. The harbour is spacious and the scenery pretty. A few miles distant, on the rising land, there is a large town; but in the bay itself is merely a village situated at the upper part. An island at the entrance has been fortified with embrasures for eighty cannon; but at the time of my visit this defence was a ruin.

On our arrival at Malta we refitted, and finally sailed for England on the 2nd of March, running through the Needles' channel to Spithead, and anchoring on the 1st of April, 1842. Here I learned, to my deep regret, of the death of my only surviving brother on the 20th of the preceding February. We were ordered to Sheerness, and paid off on the 17th of April. As I was very desirous to improve my knowledge of the English Channel, I took this opportunity to proceed for a cruise in it, and shortly afterwards passed an examination at Trinity House for master of a third-rate. I had been suffering whilst in the Black Sea

a good deal from rheumatism, and now the symptoms became very acute. The Director-General of the Navy suggested, as the most sensible thing to do, that I should go to Melville Hospital; and I did so, and have reason to be thankful for the advice; for the effective treatment received there from Dr. Rae and the other medical officers soon set me completely to rights.

On the 31st May, 1842, I received through our Government, the Turkish Medal for the capture of St. Jean d'Acre, and also the following documents:—

"HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE, ADMIRALTY,
"*26th April*, 1842.

"It gives me great pleasure to certify that Mr. George Biddlecombe, late Master of H.M. ships *Actæon* and *Talbot*, has been zealous in making himself acquainted with the Pilotage of the coasts and harbours wherever he has been employed, and that he has frequently transmitted to me much valuable hydrographic information in his Remark Books, accompanied by plans and descriptions, besides an elaborate examination of the Skerki Banks, and of Keith's Reefs, made in a steam-vessel, all of which I consider to be satisfactory proofs of his abilities as a navigator.

"(Signed) F. BEAUFORT,
"Hydrographer."

"ADMIRALTY, *2nd June*, 1842.

"SIR,

"Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 30th ultimo, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that they have ordered the Accountant-General to pay you the sum of £20 10*s.* 8*d.*, being the amount of expenses incurred by you while employed surveying the anchorage of Gallipoli and the Straits at the entrance to the Sea of Marmora; and also making remarks on the shores of the Black Sea during the stay of H.M. ship *Talbot* at Constantinople.

"(Signed) J. BARROW.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe."

CHAPTER XV.

MASTER H.M.S. *IMAUM* TO WEST INDIES AND AT PORT ROYAL DOCKYARD, 1842-5.

Marriage — Appointed to H.M.S. *Imaum* for Jamaica — Beautiful Jamaica—Examine the harbour moorings—Save the stores of H.M.S. *Megæra*—Plan for hauling up slip approved by Sir Charles Adam and sanctioned by Admiralty — Determine position of Morant Point Lighthouse—Hospitality—A West Indian estate—Survey of the harbours; hard work—Discover a new channel; take a steamer through it—Letters acknowledging services at a great fire—Pilot a French steamer—Saluted with seven guns—The Earl of Elgin—Certificate from Commodore Sharpe—Captain Wallace Houston—Assist the *James Drummond;* thanked by U.S. Consul—Complete survey of harbours—Testimonial from Kingston merchants—Write a code of Pilot Laws; approved by Lord Elgin—Assist the *Creole*—Marshal Bertrand—Aspect of free negro labour—Refugees from Hayti—Country visiting—Survey the shoals—Publicly thanked by the Governor-General, Lord Elgin—Rescue the Haytian war brig *Hero*—Survey the Line Key—Incendiarism on board a tank vessel—Injured in capture of delinquents—Hear of my father's death—Invalided—Return home—Warm recollections of many kind friends in Jamaica—Gratifying letters—Acknowledgment of my services from the Admiralty.

DURING my stay in England, at this time, I was married, on the 28th of July, 1842, at Kingston, Corfe Castle, by the rector, the Rev. Edward Bankes, to Emma Louisa, the third daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Kent, of Blashimah, Corfe

Castle, Dorsetshire; and, on the day after, received the appointment of Master to H.M.S. *Imaum*, about to proceed to Jamaica to hoist the Commodore's broad pendant at Port Royal.

I commissioned the ship and fitted her out; but as she carried a good many supernumerary lieutenants proceeding to join their ships on the station, it was necessary that an officer of seniority should be in command, and Lieutenant Mottley was appointed for the purpose. We sailed on the 25th September, and passed close to St. Alban's Head, which I viewed with mingled feelings of regret and hope, for my wife with her mother was residing close to it. We made Port Royal on the 12th of November, having called at Barbadoes on our route, at which place I met my cousin, a clerk in H.M.S. *Tweed*. At Port Royal we found the Commodore Honourable Henry D. Byng in H.M.S. *Magnificent;* and on our arrival his broad pendant was hoisted on board our ship, as the *Magnificent* was dismantled and sold. Soon after reaching our destination, I managed to make a trip into the mountains, and was charmed (I had almost said astonished), as others who have visited the spot have been, with the beauty of the scenery and the excellent cultivation of the island, as well as with the unbounded hospitality of every one in it. I was more particularly indebted for the pleasure I

received to the individual kindness of the adjutant-general, who, indeed, proved to be an old friend, Colonel Turnor. It may be remembered that he, with Mrs. Turnor, made a passage with me in the *Susan* in 1831.

Almost immediately, on my arrival, I set to work to examine the harbour moorings; and having refitted them to my liking, and finding my duties in the dockyard did not require my presence until eight in the morning, I commenced a survey of the harbours of Port Royal and Kingston. This seemed to me very necessary, for the channels were much obstructed with mud, and vessels were constantly running on shore.

On the 5th of March of the following year (1843), the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Charles Adam, in H.M.S. *Illustrious*, being at the time at Port Royal, we heard that H.M. steam-vessel *Megæra*, which had only sailed the previous day, had run ashore on Barebush Key. I was at once dispatched to render assistance. When I got to the place, I found the crew had abandoned the vessel. We ultimately reached the derelict; but it was not until one boat was twice capsized in the swell, which was very heavy. Here I contiuued with a party of men for nearly a fortnight under a burning sun, and succeeded in saving all the stores. The Commander-in-Chief was pleased in

a special letter to express his approval of the exertions made.

I should, perhaps, here mention it was in March, 1843, that I submitted to Admiral Sir Charles Adam a plan for hauling up slip and cradle at Port Royal for the repairs of vessels. He entirely approved of it and requested me to make an estimate of the expense, which, together with the plan, he forwarded to the Admiralty. It will be seen from the following (which was received only after I had left Jamaica) that on this occasion my suggestion had better fortune than the earlier one concerning the water tanks, already named.

"ADMIRALTY, *5th July*, 1844.

"SIR,

"The Master of the *Imaum* (Mr. Biddlecombe) having requested to be informed if a plan has been received for a ship and cradle, for heaving up ships at Port Royal, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that his plan was received and laid before their Lordships. You will observe that the sum of £532 was inserted in the Naval Estimates for the present year for this service, of which an extract was sent to Jamaica.

"Commodore Sharpe, C.B."

On my return to Port Royal from the wreck, I accompanied the Commander-in-Chief in H.M.S.

Avon to the east end of the island. I had previously been there to determine the exact position and particulars of Morant Point Lighthouse, of which the Admiral was a commissioner. On our visit the other commissioners attended with him. The erection of the lighthouse was most important, because of the number of vessels that had been wrecked on the Morant Keys, some distance to the southward. The heat in the interior of the edifice was intense; but since that time it has been lined with wood, and is consequently much cooler.

I have before mentioned the extreme hospitality of the people; and we had on this occasion a thorough experience of it on the various estates which we visited—though since the emancipation, many of them are not worked. Amongst those we stayed at was that of Mr. Barclay, the island treasurer, and the Golden Grove estate, in charge of the Custos of the parish, the Honourable Thomas McCorniock. The Golden Grove estate is one of the finest in the island; and I was glad to avail myself of the chance to inspect various parts of it. There were some six hundred hands. They had all been slaves; but when their emancipation had been announced to them by the manager—when they were told that they were free—they offered to continue in his service, and did so. A pretty

chapel on the estate is attended by the emancipated negroes and other parishioners; altogether, all connected with the place seemed extremely happy and comfortable. Before returning we visited the botanical gardens near the town of Bath, the latter a favourite resort in the hot season. The gardens are extensive and contain many descriptions of trees, plants, and flowers; but, as I understood it, from want of funds were not kept up to the mark.

Shortly afterwards, in the *Avon*, I towed the troopship *Apollo*, just arrived, to Montego Bay, and then carried detachments of troops to St. Lucia and Falmouth. On my return, I landed and determined the position in reference to longitude of the eastern extreme of the island, a matter which to this time had been somewhat uncertain. I had, on a previous occasion, determined the west extreme. On my return I found that Lieutenant-Colonel Dowse, R.A., had arrived as Lieutenant-Governor at Port Royal, and that the Commodore was so seriously unwell that he was invalided, leaving acting-Captain Wallace Houston in charge.

All this time I was, when in the harbour, continuing the survey of it, starting each day at 3.30 in the morning; for I had besides my duties at the Dockyard to attend to. I was rewarded by finding between Port Royal and Kingston a chan-

nel which, if very narrow, was deeper than any hitherto known. And as a Kingston Company had built an iron steamer to run to various stations in the harbour, I went in her on her first trip, and took her through the new channel, thereby considerably shortening the distance.

On August 26th, as we were saluting Prince Albert's birthday, a fire broke out in Kingston. I proceeded at once to the scene with fifty seamen and marines, Captain Houston, commanding the *Imaum*, following with all the men that could be spared. The fire was something awful, and consumed a considerable portion of the city; it was daylight next morning before it was extinguished. We worked very hard, blowing down the houses to stop the progress of destruction, and many of us received serious injuries, one man being killed. I had my clothes on fire, and for some time afterwards was completely prostrated by a severe attack of fever. The following letters serve to mark the appreciation of our services on the occasion:—

"KINGSTON, *6th September*, 1843.

SIR,

"I have great pleasure in complying with a resolution of the Corporation of this City, namely, that the Mayor should communicate to the senior officer of the Navy on this station the

thanks of that body, for his anxious and unremitting attention, and that of the officers, petty officers, and seamen and marines under his command, for the very laudable and efficient services they rendered in extinguishing the late extensive fire on the 26th of August last; which without their unceasing exertions would have consumed a greater part of the city.

"(Signed) HECTOR MITCHELL,
"Mayor.

"Captain Wallace Houston,
"Senior Naval Officer."

"H.M.S. 'IMAUM,' PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA,
"18*th September*, 1843.

"SIR,

"At the request of the Merchants and other inhabitants of the City of Kingston, I enclose a letter of thanks from them to you, as a special mark of their grateful acknowledgments of the valuable services rendered by you during the late calamitous fire in that city.

"This duty is particularly agreeable to me, as I am well aware that your services on that occasion merit being thus handsomely noticed.

"(Signed) WALLACE HOUSTON,
"Captain and Senior Officer.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,
"Master H.M. Ship *Imaum*."

"KINGSTON, *8th September*, 1843.

"SIR,

"Although the feelings of this community have been expressed by a vote of thanks to the navy and military and others, for the distinguished services rendered by the officers and men during the late calamitous fire, we cannot allow the opportunity to pass without presenting to you our grateful acknowledgments for your indefatigable exertions in endeavouring to arrest the progress of the fire at imminent personal risk.

"Signed { NATHL. DARRELL,
THOS. MCWHINNEY.

"To George Biddlecombe, Esq., R.N.,
"H.M. Ship *Imaum*."

In October, the French steam frigate *Gomer* arrived, having on board a commission who were going over the proposed route for the French mail steamers. I took charge of the ship through the narrow channel to Kingston, into which vessels of her size seldom ventured. I was present at the entertainment given to the commission by the city, and again took charge of the vessel on her proceeding to sea, receiving on leaving her side a complimentary salute of seven guns.

After his Excellency the Earl of Elgin had opened the House of Assembly, I had the honour

to be presented to him by the Attorney-General, Mr. Dowell O'Reilly. His lordship conversed with me for some time, and was pleased to express his sense of my exertions for the improvement to the harbour. The President of the Council then invited me to dine, when I had the honour to meet the Earl of Elgin, the Council, and the Speaker, Mr. Dallas.

At this time, Commodore Alexander Renton Sharpe, C.B., arrived to supersede Captain Houston. I had an early evidence of the Commodore's good opinion; for on his arrival he inspected the dockyard, and was pleased to give me the following certificate:—

"PORT ROYAL, *6th September*, 1843.

"I do hereby certify that on taking charge of this dockyard I found all things appertaining to the superintending Master's department in good order, and in my opinion Mr. George Biddlecombe is deserving of anything the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may grant him, as being an active, zealous, and attentive officer, in every point of service.

"(Signed) A. R. SHARPE,
"Commodore."

Indeed the Commodore on all occasions treated

me with marked kindness, which was not the less gratifying because of the assurance that it was in part caused by his appreciation of my zeal for the service. Captain Wallace Houston, I may here remark, ultimately left Port Royal in the following year, in consequence of disappointment in promotion. When he did leave, I parted with him with sincere regret. A more upright officer never stepped.

In December the Admiral Commanding-in-Chief arrived. A day or two afterwards the *James Drummond*, an American brigantine, ran ashore outside the harbour, and I took a party of men and succeeded in getting her off and safely into harbour, with the loss of rudder only. The United States Consul acknowledged my services in the following letter:—

"AMERICAN CONSULATE, KINGSTON,
"*December* 16*th*, 1843.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Your note of yesterday has just been received, and I feel grateful indeed for the great exertions you have made in getting off and bringing into port the American brig *Drummond*. I shall not fail in addressing a letter to his Excellency, Admiral Sir Charles Adam, expressive of the obligation myself and my countrymen are

under to you and to the men under your command.

"I am, Sir, &c.,

"(Signed) ROBT. MONROE HARRISON.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,

"H.M. Ship *Imaum.*"

I had, just previously to this time, completed the survey of the inner part of the harbours of Port Royal and Kingston, and sent a copy of it to the Corporation of the City of Kingston. I received most gratifying acknowledgments of my services in the following letters and address. The earlier letter was written on receipt of my survey; the address was presented a little later, through the Commander-in-Chief, when the merchants had fully realised the safety with which vessels could be navigated through the channels, since I had surveyed and buoyed them, and was accompanied by the gift of a chronometer:—

"KINGSTON, *7th November*, 1843.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have had great pleasure in presenting to the Common Council your letter, which was accompanied with a map of the harbours of Kingston and Port Royal, with all the soundings, and containing much information relating to the channels and shoals between the two towns; and

I am happy in conveying to you the thanks of the Court for this present. In obedience also to the desire of the Court, it will be gratifying to me to consult with you about the best way to obtain a lithographic print of your chart of these harbours, that it may be generally useful.

"I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,

"(Signed) HECTOR MITCHELL,

"Mayor.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,
"H.M. Ship *Imaum.*"

"H.M.S. 'IMAUM,' PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA,
"*January* 3, 1844.

"MEMO.—You will receive herewith for your information the copy of a letter from the Commander-in-Chief, and the enclosed address therein mentioned.

"(Signed) A. R. SHARPE,

"Commodore.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,
"H.M. Ship *Imaum.*"

"H.M.S. 'ILLUSTRIOUS,' PORT ROYAL,
"*1st January*, 1844.

"SIR,

"Having received a letter from the merchants of Kingston, with the enclosed address to Mr. George Biddlecombe, Master of the *Imaum*, I have to desire that you will convey to that officer

that I have much satisfaction in permitting him to accept from the merchants of Kingston the expression of their gratitude for the essential service which has been rendered by Mr. George Biddlecombe, and which reflects so much credit on him.

"(Signed) CHARLES ADAM,
"Vice-Admiral Commander-in-Chief.

"To Commodore Sharpe, C.B."

"ADDRESS.

"KINGSTON, 14*th December*, 1843.

"To George Biddlecombe, Esq.

"SIR,—We, the undersigned, highly appreciating your useful services in surveying and buoying the channel of this harbour, which have already proved of great benefit to the shipping, and must continue so to do, respectfully solicit your acceptance of the accompanying chronometer, as a small token of our gratitude, and with our warmest wishes that you may long live to serve her Majesty and to apply your talents to objects so useful to the community.

"We have the honour to be, &c."

(Signed by the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, together with the merchants of Jamaica, about fifty in number altogether.)

On the 1st of January, 1844, the Mayor of Kingston invited me to a banquet, where I met his Excellency the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, and the heads of departments. I had previously forwarded a code of pilot laws through the Commander-in-Chief to Lord Elgin; and the latter was pleased on this occasion to express to me his approval of it, and to state his intention to submit it to the consideration of the House of Assembly. Sir Charles Adam also warmly expressed his approval of the survey, by which, as he said, I had made the navigation of the harbour safe and easy.

Once again, in March, I received personally from the Commander-in-Chief the assurance of his approbation of my exertions; this time in connection with services rendered to the Spanish schooner-of-war *Creole*. The vessel had run ashore to the east of the island, and when I reached her with a dockyard lighter I found her bilged. I anchored to her as close as possible, and managed to save all the guns and stores, and embarking the crew returned to Port Royal. On my return, the Spanish Consul informed me that he had written to his government at Madrid in high terms of what I had done.

At this time the French brig-of-war, the *Mercure*, arrived, having on board Marshal Bertrand, the companion of Napoleon in exile. He had with

him his son, Napoleon, named after the great conqueror. When he had completed a tour of the island, he invited me to breakfast with him on board the ship; and afterwards, when the *Mercure* sailed, I took her through the intricate channels, and on leaving was most warmly thanked both by the Marshal and the captain of the ship; indeed, they gave me a salute—and thus, a second time, seven guns were fired in my honour by our quondam bitter enemies.

It was a great pleasure to meet one who, in connection with the great Napoleon, had rendered himself so conspicuous; and, moreover, my acquaintance with him gave me the opportunity to hear from his own lips his opinion on the abolition of slavery. The object of the visit was to get information concerning the effects of manumission, as the French Government were contemplating a similar action; but he did not approve the plan carried out by our Government. Of course I could see for myself, in the many excursions which I made and visits I paid, that to work the estates was very difficult, owing to the actual scarcity of labour. The emancipated negro, possessing the smallest piece of ground, considers that he has done his duty when he produces sufficient for his own consumption; and only very occasionally will he carry produce to market, although sure of

a very fair price. The wants of a negro are very small; and as by nature he is idle, it is not only difficult to get him to work, but even when engaged, he will throw it up at the most awkward time without any notice. Whole fields of sugar-cane are in this way destroyed. The proprietor can only look on when master Sambo takes it into his head to knock off work. Certainly the roads were little suited to bring produce to the seaports; but the railroad then constructing, from Kingston to Spanish Town, ought to lead to an improvement of the roads generally, and in this way immensely benefit the island.

During this period a terrible civil war was raging in the neighbouring island of Hayti; armed ruffians going about demanding property and murdering people in every direction. Numbers of the more peaceable inhabitants escaped to Jamaica, or otherwise would have lost their lives, and for these refugees a considerable sum was collected. Amongst them was the ex-president, Boyer, with his family. For him, individually, sympathy was qualified by the knowledge that the rising might be traced chiefly to his oppressions. He had ruled the island many years; but instead of improving it, had brought it to the fearful state in which it was.

A few days' illness at this time made it advisable

to accept the invitation of Mr. Dallas, the Speaker, to visit his residence in the mountains. He drove me so far as the road permitted in his carriage, and we completed the journey on horseback over a zig-zag road some four miles long, which was just wide enough to allow two horses to pass each other. The scenery was most beautiful, and changed at each turn of the road. When we reached the house, which was charmingly situated and covered with jessamine and roses in full bloom, I met a hearty welcome from Mrs. Dallas and her family. The climate here was delicious, and the cool nights very enjoyable. The following day we crossed the hills to visit Lord Elgin at his residence, which was situated at an elevation of two thousand feet, and presented on all sides extensive views both of land and sea-scape. His Excellency received us with marked kindness. On my return journey I visited the Attorney-General; but it was rather a melancholy visit, as he had just heard of the death of his brother Colonel O'Reilly, the husband of the Duchess of Roxburghe.

When I again reached Port Royal I continued the survey of the shoals outside. On the Queen's birthday I was invited to the banquet given by the Governor-General, at which all the principal officers and heads of departments in the island were present. On the occasion a carriage was

specially sent for the Commodore and myself, and we were most cordially received by his Excellency; who, moreover, referring to myself, was pleased publicly to state that no officer who had come to Jamaica, in any capacity, had done so much for the public and mercantile body.

In August of this year (1844) a Haytian war-brig, the *Hero*, with a Haytian admiral and some hundred and fifty refugees on board, left Port Royal for Hayti; but had scarcely cleared the channel when a violent storm split the sails, and when the pilot attempted to re-enter the channel he missed it and had to let go both anchors. This expedient was ineffective, for the squall drew the vessel amongst the reefs of Helshire. In this emergency I took a schooner and went to her assistance. It was with the utmost difficulty that I got on board her with a few men; but so soon as I had done so, I had other sails bent, slipped the cables, and ran the vessel through the intricate reefs safely into Port Royal. Only the knowledge gained in surveying enabled me to do this. Indeed, the pilot durst not attempt it; and as shortly after a severe gale came on, the chances are, had I not been present, that the vessel would have been totally wrecked and many lives lost. I was rewarded by the genuine feeling with which the Haytian Admiral expressed to the Commodore

his thanks to me and the men under me for the timely rescue.

Continuing the survey to seaward, I examined and reported on Line Key with respect to its suitability as a Quarantine station; for at the time the cholera was prevalent in some parts of Europe. His Excellency sent me the following acknowledgment of the copy forwarded to him:

"KING'S HOUSE, *24th August*, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have to express the Governor's thanks for a copy of your Trigonometrical Survey of Line Key, and its adjacent shoals, transmitted through Captain Allen, which his Excellency has examined with much interest.

"Faithfully yours,

"R. BRUCE, Secretary.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

On the evening of the 9th of October, one of our tank vessels being reported set on fire, I started with some men to it, and after extinguishing the fire, at once proceeded to capture the delinquents, who had gone on board a coast-vessel lying in the harbour. Unfortunately, on climbing over the side, I fell and severely injured myself. So much

so that I was taken on board the *Imaum*, and though I returned to duty in a few days, was unable to exert myself much. At this time, or rather some few days later, on the arrival of the mail, I had the grave misfortune to receive news of my father's death at Sheerness Dockyard (where he was an officer), on the 12th of September, 1844. He was buried at Minster Church, Isle of Sheppey. I cannot describe my feelings. I had been ailing, and now became seriously unwell. The following feeling note from my great friend Lieutenant Bambridge, who was sailing next day in command of the schooner *Pickle*, has a peculiar interest for me from the fact that it was the last communication I had from him, as the poor fellow himself died of yellow fever a short time afterwards:

"H.M.S. 'PICKLE,' JAMAICA,
November, 1844.

"DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,—

"I am much grieved at the domestic affliction which I learn this day you have heard of. These sort of things are a heavy warning to us of a link being broken in the chain of our existence, and, to a man of your feelings, must I know be too acute for anything but time to soften. I shall therefore not think of condoling with you this evening, but hope on my return to find that time

has done its work by rendering you calm and resigned.

"Ever, my dear fellow,

"Very truly your friend,

"J. BAMBRIDGE."

My health now gradually got worse, and after a medical examination I was invalided on the 30th November, 1844. Commodore Sharpe kindly gave me a room in his home; but shortly afterwards I removed to my friend Dr. Bailey's. Colonel and Mrs. Dowse, my great friends the Baileys, in fact all my friends in the island, were most attentive. I gradually, however, got worse, having attacks of fever with loss of flesh and appetite, and on the 9th December was carried on board the Royal Mail steamer *Tweed* for England. When we reached St. Thomas I was somewhat better and took a drive; but the excitement did me no good, and I became delirious. At Bermuda, where we were transferred to the Royal Mail steamer *Forth*, I found the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Charles Adam, who wrote me a letter expressing regret at my illness, and that it should have caused my departure from Port Royal, and enclosing one from the Hydrographer of the Admiralty. At Bermuda, too, I found good friends in Mr. Ballingall, the storekeeper, and his wife, who was

the sister of my friend of early days in India, Mr. King. We reached Southampton, after a boisterous passage, on the 5th of January, 1845. I was so weak that it was with difficulty I got to Portsmouth and thence to Kingston, Dorsetshire, where my wife was living. Her astonishment at my emaciated state, although she had been prepared by letter, was very great. Indeed, I was so ill that the Director-General of the Medical Department recommended me to go to Haslar Hospital; which, after consulting with Dr. Richardson of that establishment, I did. Here I rapidly improved in health, and employed myself in making fair copies of my surveys of Port Royal and Kingston harbours.

It would be impossible, as it would be ungrateful, to conclude the account of my stay in Jamaica without acknowledging my deep sense of the kindness and hospitality received from my many friends there: from, amongst others, Lord Elgin (whose guest at King's House I was, with the Commodore, for a couple of days), from the Attorney-General, the Speaker, and Mr. Wilson, the Postmaster-General, from the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Dowse and his wife, from Mr. Wellwood Hyslop (a commissioner of Morant Point Lighthouse), and from my great friends the Baileys. Some of the pleasantest trips I remember to have

made in the island were in the company of Mr. Charlton, who remained with me for a fortnight on his way to England. He, it may be remembered, had been very kind to us in 1836, when he was Consul at the Sandwich Islands. For all this I could make no adequate return; the only occasion, indeed, being on the 3rd November, 1843, when, finding myself the only executive officer in H.M.S. *Imaum*, I was able to entertain at dinner Captain Houston, with most of the important officials, and the Speaker and several members of the House, who all remained over night, having beds provided for them on board, and apparently enjoyed themselves excessively.

When I left, the Commodore and numerous friends accompanied me on board, and I took leave of them and of the island in which I had laboured with great pleasure, with sincere regret. The Governor-General was pleased to address me on the occasion as follows:—

"KING'S HOUSE, JAMAICA,
"*December*, 1844.

"SIR,

"His Excellency the Earl of Elgin cannot permit you to quit the colony under his government without expressing his sense of your service in devoting so much labour and professional skill to the improvement of the Harbours

of Port Royal and Kingston; and taking the soundings, and laying down a chart of them, and of the intervening channels. With most sincere regret that ill-health should have caused your removal,

"I have the honour to be, &c.,

"R. BRUCE, Secretary.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

The Attorney-General, who had always been most friendly to me, sent me the following letter:—

"KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
"*7th December*, 1844.

"DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I greatly regret to learn that we are about to lose you on this station, and that illness should be the cause is a matter of additional vexation. I sincerely hope your native air will renovate your strength. Lord Elgin is at Craig, in the Port Royal Mountains. I shall not see him before your departure, but shall write him to-day. I have no doubt he will be happy to confirm the testimony of the gentlemen of this country, who have witnessed your valuable services exerted for the naval benefit of the island.

"I am, my dear Biddlecombe,

"Sincerely yours,

"DANIEL O'REILLY."

The Commissioners of Morant Point Lighthouse

deputed one of their number (Mr. Hyslop) to wait upon me to express their regret at my departure, and their desire to recognise my services to them by the presentation of a piece of plate. Time, however, would not permit the presentation; and they, therefore, sent the following letter and gift, which latter I expended in the purchase of a tea-service:—

"KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
"*7th December*, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The Commissioners of the Morant Point Lighthouse beg to hand you the inclosed cheque for £50, as a slight acknowledgment of the services rendered by you in surveying the coast in the vicinity of the lighthouse, ascertaining the bearings with regard to Port Royal, and laying down the exact distance at which the light is first visible at an elevation of twelve feet, and completing a drawing thereof, which the Commissioners have ordered to be lithographed.

"Wishing you a pleasant passage and speedy restoration to health,

"I remain, my dear Sir, &c.,
"S. J. DALLAS.

"George Biddlecombe."

At later dates I received from the Admiralty (to whom I had sent, when completed, the fair copy of my survey, and a copy of the code of pilot

laws which I had drawn up at Jamaica) the following acknowledgments of my services :—

"HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE, ADMIRALTY,
"*April 17th*, 1845.

"Since my last certificate to Mr. George Biddlecombe, in 1842, he has been serving in the West Indies, and has proved, by employing his spare time in constructing an accurate chart of the entrances to Port Royal and Kingston, the zeal which animates him for the benefit of H.M. Service and for the interests of navigation.

"(Signed) F. BEAUFORT,
"Hydrographer."

"ADMIRALTY, *August 19th*, 1847.

"SIR,

"With reference to your letter of the 26th July last, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that the Accountant-General of the Navy has been directed to pay to you the sum of £40 (as a mark of their approbation of your services whilst making the survey of Port Royal and Kingston Harbours in the island of Jamaica), upon your application to him for that purpose.

"(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON,
"Secretary.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,
"H.M.S. *St. Vincent.*"

CHAPTER XVI.

MASTER OF H.M.S. *TRAFALGAR* AND H.M.S. *ST. VINCENT*, 1846-9.

A holiday—Appointed to H.M.S. *Trafalgar*—Expected war with the United States—Transferred to the *St. Vincent*—Cadiz; excitement of populace—Lagos—Find a channel for H.M.S. *Sphinx* stranded on the Isle of Wight—Visit of Her Majesty—Re-visit the Douro—Reception of Sir Charles Napier at Lisbon—Kindly received by the Duke of Palmella—Survey the entrance of the Tagus—Conduct H.M.S. *Howe* with H.M. the Queen Dowager up the river—Cordial reception of Her Majesty—My survey of the Tagus acknowledged by the Portuguese Minister and by the Admiralty—Publication of my work "The Art of Rigging"—The rising in Dublin—Complimentary visit of H.M. Ministers to Sir C. Napier—The first screw line-of-battle ship—The Hon. Mrs. Norton—Melilla—Moorish audacity—Obtain indemnity from Moorish Pirates—Terrific gale in the Bay of Biscay—Curious coincidences of our return—Sir C. Napier's kindliness and popularity—Receive the Syrian war medal—Thanked by the Central Committee of Masters.

WHEN on my return from Jamaica, in 1845, I had gained a little strength, I proceeded to London to be examined by the Medical Board, Admiral Bowles and Sir William Burnett, Director-General, who advised my return to Haslar, where I remained until the 13th of March of that year. On the 6th of May following I passed, at the Trinity

House, the highest qualification for any of H.M. ships; but on consulting Sir Benjamin Brodie, he advised me not to accept an appointment for at least six months. Thus, when later I waited on Captain Dundas, Lord Haddington's private secretary at the Admiralty, and he offered me an appointment to H.M.S. *Victory*, at Portsmouth, I could not take it. When he learned Sir Benjamin's opinion, the matter was deferred until my health should be restored, and I proceeded to Dorsetshire, and stayed there a considerable time.

It was not until the March of the following year (1846) that I took up active employment. I then received a communication from Admiral Sir William Gage, at the Admiralty, to say that, if I were well enough, he would appoint me to H.M.S. *Trafalgar*, at the Nore, bearing the flag of Admiral King. I joined the ship on March 31st, and had the opportunity, a few days afterwards, to pay a visit to my father's grave in the Minster churchyard, Isle of Sheppey. In April we proceeded to Spithead to join the experimental squadron under Commodore Sir Francis Collier. Sir Francis had been a very old friend of my father's in the East Indies, and when he came on board the *Trafalgar* with the First Lord of the Admiralty (the Earl of Ellenborough), he presented me to his lordship.

It was at this time expected that war would break out with the United States, and the squadron proceeded to sea, and for some weeks cruised off Ushant, ultimately returning to Cork. From Cork, in consequence of serious damage to the rudder, the *Trafalgar* proceeded to Plymouth for repairs; which completed, we sailed again for the rendezvous, joining the fleet under Vice-Admiral Sir William Parker in H.M.S. *Hibernia*. We touched again at Cork, where I was transferred from the *Trafalgar* to H.M.S. *St. Vincent*, Commodore Sir Francis Collier, and then the fleet sailed for the coast of Portugal. We stayed off the coasts of Spain and Portugal until September, when, in company of H.M.S. *Queen*, we left the fleet and returned to England. When we were at Cadiz during this trip, there was great excitement in consequence of our arrival in company with other vessels of the fleet, because of the disapproval of our Government of the marriages of the Queen and her sister. The Alameda was crowded with people, and it was a grand sight to see the ships beat into the roads in a fresh gale. On this voyage I was much struck to think whilst at Lagos, which is an irregularly built and a dirty town with very idle inhabitants, that here Earl St. Vincent had watered the fleet during the late wars, whereas we had the greatest difficulty to get fifty casks daily for the

whole fleet; and as for supplies, there was nothing worthy the name to be had.

A heavy gale caught us on our homeward voyage off Ushant. We were, however, able to fetch Plymouth Sound, passing close to the Eddystone at 2 A.M., when the sea was making a breach over it, and anchored at daylight on the 5th October. Here we found a Brazilian frigate just arrived from Rio de Janeiro, with Mr. Hamilton, the envoy, and his lady on board, who, it may be remembered, were our passengers home in the *Actæon* in 1838. We took them on board the *St. Vincent*, and sailed for Portsmouth. When we came into harbour we hoisted the flag of Admiral Sir Charles Ogle, Bart., the Commander-in-Chief, and changed captains—Captain Alexander Milne succeeding Captain John Shepherd.

In February, 1847, H.M. steamship *Sphinx* having run ashore at the back of the Isle of Wight, I was ordered to the spot to find a channel through which she might be brought when floated; and, when I had completed the survey, received from the Admiralty, through the Commander-in-Chief, their lordships' approbation of what I had done. Having refitted the *St. Vincent*, we went, in May, to Spithead, where Sir Charles Ogle's flag was hauled down, and we hoisted that of Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Napier as Commander-in-

Chief of the Experimental Squadron, with which we sailed on the 27th July—on which day we hoisted the Royal Standard, in honour of the visit of her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen and Prince Albert. Her Majesty remained on board until we passed through the East Channel, returning in the *Fairy* yacht. All the officers were presented to her Majesty, and Prince Albert was further pleased to notice that I was the officer in pilot-charge.

We cruised in the Channel, and then proceeded to Portugal, off the coast of which we remained until early in the following year. During this cruise I left the ship at Lisbon, and proceeded in H.M. steamship *Comet* to the River Douro, touching on our way at Peniche, the entrance to which lies between two rocks commanded by the citadel and batteries, and is therefore difficult. It is a fishing-town, the fish being cured and sent to Lisbon. I remained a few days in the Douro, returning to Lisbon in H.M. steamship *Jackal*. Whilst there, the merchants of Oporto gave us a splendid entertainment at their factory. Altogether it was a pleasant time to me in memory of the old days when I served at the siege of the city in 1833; and during my stay I took the opportunity to visit the convent of St. Christo, commanding a most extensive view, and Don Miguel's look-out, which he

occupied during the war, and from which the positions at that time occupied by the troops could be distinctly seen. I also attended service at the English church. It is well kept, and the churchyard a perfect garden, in strong contrast to the native churches, in which the stench from the dead bodies was something horrible.

I should mention that when we first anchored in the Tagus in August, 1847, we had a distinguished reception, for Sir Charles Napier was an Admiral and Peer of Portugal. The forts and foreign war vessels saluted him on his arrival; the Portuguese Minister at once came off to visit him; and, a few days later, the King and two princes, accompanied by many important personages, came on board to luncheon. Amongst them was the Duke of Palmella, who invited me to dinner, remembering me at once, when introduced by Sir Charles Napier. He was very marked in his attention, referring often to the occasion, in 1832, when he was on board the steamship *London Merchant*, and when we took her at night-time across the bar of the Douro, his own countrymen having declined to attempt it. This, as has been told, was successfully carried out close to the Miguelite batteries.

Being much of our time in the Tagus during this trip, I examined the channels at the entrance.

As I found important errors in the existing chart, the Commander-in-Chief ordered me to complete the survey of the shoals of the Tagus; also as H.M.S. *Howe*, having on board her Majesty the Queen Dowager of England, was expected, to await the ship's arrival at the entrance of the river, and pilot her up to Lisbon. This I did on the 22nd October, 1847, and was presented by the captain, Sir James Stirling, to her Majesty, and to H.S.H. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, who accompanied her. The reception of her Majesty at Lisbon was very grand. When the *Howe* was reported in sight, the whole fleet under Sir Charles Napier weighed and formed two lines below Belem Castle, the ships and forts in every direction saluting the *Howe* as she passed through. Immediately on anchoring the King, with the officers of state and Sir Charles Napier, and the officers of the fleet, went on board the *Howe;* and the next day, when her Majesty landed, she was very well received, the whole people being anxious to see the Queen Dowager of England. After a few days' stay, her Majesty proceeded in H.M.S. *Howe* to Madeira.

Whilst at Lisbon, Captain Milne, who left for England, was succeeded in the *St. Vincent* by Captain Sydney C. Dacres. I continued my survey of the Tagus, and, on its completion, the

Commander-in-Chief sent it to the Admiralty, with a copy also to the Portuguese Minister of Marine. It was acknowledged in the following:—

"'St. Vincent,' Cove of Cork,
"*14th April*, 1848.

"Sir,

"I transmit to you the accompanying copy of a letter I have received from his Excellency the Minister of Marine at Lisbon, thanking me for the chart of the Tagus, constructed by Mr. George Biddlecombe, Master of the *St. Vincent*, from his survey of that river, which chart I presented to his Excellency for the information of the Portuguese Government.

"(Signed) Charles Napier,
"Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

"Captain Dacres,
"H.M.S. *St. Vincent.*"

(Enclosure.)

"Lisbon, *7th March*, 1848.

"Sir,

"I received with great pleasure the important gift of the chart of the Tagus your Excellency has had the goodness to transmit to me, and I pray you will accept my best thanks.

"(Signed) Agostinho Albano Silveiro Pinto,
"Ministro de Marinha a ultra mar.

"His Excellency Sir Charles Napier."

"'STROMBOLI,' WATERFORD,
"*5th August*, 1848.

"(Memorandum.)

"Herewith you will receive copy of their Lordships' letter, informing me that they have ordered Mr. Biddlecombe to be paid £15 for his services in surveying the Tagus.

"(Signed) CHARLES NAPIER,
"Rear-Admiral.

"Captain Dacres,
"H.M.S. *St. Vincent.*"

On our return home, in 1848, we made the Fastnet Rock on the 22nd of March, and next morning entered Cork Harbour. Here I received a copy of my work, "Art of Rigging," just then published by Wilson of Leadenhall Street. We were well entertained at Cork, where the hospitality is proverbial, and I was considerably interested by a visit which I made to the Tower of Father Mathew, with its curious sculptures. The views from it are very fine, and it attracted many people, the alms collected being distributed to the poor. But on our arrival at Cork all other interest was lost in the prevalent excitement, the consequence of the revolution in France, increased, a little later, by reports of an intended rising in Dublin. Sir Charles Napier proceeded to the capital to confer with the Lord-Lieutenant as to

the disposal of the seamen and marines, and several of the vessels were detached to the different ports. But, as is well known, this rising, popularly supposed to have ended in a "cabbage garden," resulted in the capture of the chief characters concerned in it—Mr. Smith O'Brien amongst the number.

On the 19th of February, 1848, we were again at Spithead, when the high appreciation of Sir Charles Napier's services was exhibited by a visit paid to him by the chief members of the Ministry. Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, the Earl of Auckland, and other Ministers, came to dine on board the *St. Vincent*. A hard gale coming on, the dinner took place on shore; but the next day, when the gale moderated, the First Lord (the Earl of Auckland), with Admiral Sir Charles Ogle, Captain Milne, and others, came on board the ship, and we took a short cruise for the day to witness the performance of the *Blenheim*, the first ship of the line in which the screw was introduced. She made five knots.

We cruised with a squadron, and once more sailed for Portugal, leaving Spithead on December 17th, 1848, and arriving in the Tagus on the 4th of January, 1849. On this voyage the Hon. Mrs. Norton was passenger with us to Lisbon. We had gales pretty well the whole way out, but

it is needless to say that the evenings in the Admiral's cabin, to which I had the pleasure to be invited, were rendered most enjoyable by the conversation of this distinguished lady.

From the Tagus we proceeded to Gibraltar, with the intention of demanding from the Emperor of Morocco an indemnity for the piracies of his people on English merchant vessels. These piracies were committed close to Fort Melilla, which belongs to Spain, and where that country maintains a considerable force under a general officer. But, strange to say, the troops seldom ventured outside the fortifications, for the mountaineers, who are capital marksmen, killed them off from behind the rocks so soon as they appeared. The bold fellows often approached sufficiently near to the fortress to shoot the sentinels.

When Sir Charles Napier found that the government of the Emperor would do nothing to control the pirates in his dominions, it was resolved to bring a regiment of troops from Gibraltar to co-operate with the naval force. But when the expedition arrived off Melilla and communicated with the Spanish general—Sir Charles Napier, who commanded in H.M.S. *Sidon*, on learning that the numerous caves in the locality promised to the pirates perfect immunity from capture, decided to return to Gibraltar. The expedition, however, had

a satisfactory result; for the tribes conceiving it to be a ruse, and that it was intended to return when the crops were ripe and destroy these their only subsistence, sent a chief to Tangiers who engaged to pay an indemnity, and not to interfere with British vessels again.

When the squadron dispersed, we left Gibraltar on the 16th March, and on our homeward voyage experienced the most terrific gale I have ever witnessed, in the Bay of Biscay. We could carry scarcely any sail, yet the bows were plunged under water and we shipped many heavy seas. When it moderated we made sail and reached old England on the morning of the 4th of April; but a South-East gale blowing at the time we sheltered in Plymouth Sound, reaching Spithead only on the 7th. We were then ordered to Portsmouth, where Sir Charles Napier struck his flag, and the ship was paid off. It is a remarkable fact that this was the third occasion on which the *St. Vincent* had to run into Plymouth on entering the channel because of a South-East gale. The first time was on October 5, 1846, when flying the broad pendant of Admiral Sir Francis; the second with Sir Charles Napier on September 30, 1848; and now, as has been related, on April 4, 1849.

When we were paid off, the officers invited Sir Charles Napier and Captain Dacres to a dinner at

the George Hotel, Plymouth. I shall always remember the kind feeling which Sir Charles displayed to every one of us when he returned thanks for the toast of his health, which had been heartily drunk with three times three.

I received the following on paying off.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe served as Master of the *St. Vincent*, my Flag Ship, in the Channel Squadron, from the 20th of May, 1847, to this date; and I have great pleasure in stating that Mr. Biddlecombe's zeal, abilities, and trustworthiness, as Master and Pilot, were such as to merit my entire approbation and confidence.

"Dated at Portsmouth, the 19th April, 1849.

"(Signed) CHARLES NAPIER,

"Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief."

I also, about this time, received the war medal for Syria and the capture of St. Jean d'Acre, accompanied by the following letter.

"ADMIRALTY, 10*th April*, 1849.

"SIR,

"I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you the medal graciously awarded to you by Her Majesty,

under the general orders of the 1st of June, 1847, and 7th of June, 1848.

"(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,

"H.M.S. *St. Vincent.*"

I should perhaps mention that I had the pleasure to present to Prince Victor of Hohenlohe, then a midshipman in the Royal Navy, a copy of my work on the "Art of Rigging." Also, that at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Masters of the Royal Navy in London, on the 15th of February, 1849, it was resolved, "That Mr. George Biddlecombe, Master of H.M.S. *St. Vincent*, be most cordially thanked by the Committee, for his energetic exertions in getting up the late petition to the Admiralty."

CHAPTER XVII.

MASTER OF THE ROYAL YACHT *VICTORIA AND ALBERT*, 1849-50. MASTER OF H.M.S. *ST. GEORGE* AND OF H.M.S. *ROYAL WILLIAM*, 1851-4.

Appointed to the Royal Yacht—Death of my mother—The Queen's first visit to Ireland—Cork and Dublin—Cross to Scotland—Enthusiasm of the people everywhere—Prince Alfred's coolness—Publish "Remarks on the English Channel"—Received as a text-book—Take Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar to Gibraltar—The ladies disappointed — Vigo — Corunna — Bordeaux — Prince Leiningen—Prepare track chart for Her Majesty—Unpleasant disagreement—Letter from Sir C. Napier—Decline reappointment —Appointed to H.M.S. *St. George*—Vote of thanks from Committee of Masters—Proposal to the Admiralty for four-masted vessels—How the idea was then received—Transferred to H.M.S. *Royal William*.

BEFORE being paid off from the *St. Vincent*, I was appointed Master of her Majesty's yacht *Victoria and Albert;* on which occasion I received the accompanying letter from Admiral Sir Charles Ogle:

"4, HYDE PARK PLACE, W.,
"*April 20th*, 1849.

"DEAR MR. BIDDLECOMBE,

"I have much pleasure in congratulating you on your appointment to the Royal Yacht, and assure you that I have always mentioned your

services, when I had an opportunity of doing so, as deserving attention.

"With my best wishes, believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"CHARLES OGLE."

After a short leave of absence, I rejoined the Royal Yacht on the 1st of July, 1849. She had been made ready for the summer season, and on the next day we embarked her Majesty, with Prince Albert and the Royal family, and proceeded to Cowes, where we remained in attendance.

On July 13th, I received intelligence of my mother's death. The cholera was raging at the time. She had been seized with it at 5 o'clock on the previous evening, and died at 6 o'clock in the morning. She was buried in Kingston churchyard near my brother. Sad melancholy tidings indeed! for I had only taken leave of her the day before in comparatively good health. I was now left with no nearer relatives than my late brother's three sons, Thomas, Edward, and James. I had them placed at school near my residence, so that I might know their progress.

At 3 P.M. on the 1st of August, 1849, the Queen, the Prince, and the Royal family embarked on board the *Victoria and Albert*, in order to proceed to Ireland. Earl Fortescue and Sir George Grey,

Bart., were the Lords in attendance, when I was officially presented to her Majesty, as Master of her Majesty's yacht, by Captain the Right Honourable Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence. Accompanied by a squadron of steam-vessels, we proceeded through the Needles, and after a delightful passage anchored in Cork Harbour at 9 P.M. on the following day. Next morning the Lord-Lieutenant of the county (the Earl of Bandon) and the principal people came off to pay homage; and at noon, the Queen and Prince embarking in the *Fairy* landed at the Cove of Cork, then named Queenstown, in commemoration of her Majesty's first landing in Ireland. Re-embarking, shortly, the Royal party proceeded on to Cork, and entering Lord Bandon's carriage, drove through the principal thoroughfares, and returned, steaming slowly down the River Lee. The beautiful scenery was enhanced by the loveliness of the day, and by the animation of the scene, numberless steamers following us—for I had the honour to accompany the party. Next day we sailed for Waterford, where we remained all night; and here Prince Albert landed for a short time. On the following morning at 8.20 A.M., blowing rather fresh, we steamed for Kingstown, and being joined at 6.30 P.M. on August 5, by the squadron which had preceded us, all entered Kingstown Harbour

together. On the 6th, a morning without a cloud, Prince George of Cambridge, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland (the Earl of Clarendon), the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces (General Blakeney) came off and were presented to her Majesty on the deck of the *Victoria and Albert;* and at 10 A.M. the roaring of the cannon of the men-of-war, which were dressed and with manned yards, announced that the Queen was landing. After a most brilliant visit, her Majesty left on the 10th of August for Belfast. The enthusiasm of the people culminated when, on leaving, the Queen, with Prince Albert and the Royal children, was on the paddle-box, and her Majesty waved her handkerchief to the thousands who crowded the shore to the water's edge. The very air was rent with the voices of the multitude, and the scene one of enthusiasm beyond description.

After a short visit to Belfast, where, owing to the weather—a fresh gale blowing—her Majesty landed only with some difficulty, we proceeded to Scotland, shipping on the way some heavy seas. An accident occurred in crossing to the entablature of the engine; but fortunately not until we were near Loch Ryan, where we anchored, and, with a temporary repair, were able to proceed to Loch Goil and Loch Long. It was intended that her Majesty should land at the head of the latter loch,

but the rain fell so piteously that the notion was given up. However, not to disappoint the people, who, in spite of the rain, were assembled in large numbers at Arrochar, the landing-place, Prince Albert went on shore and proceeded overland to Loch Lomond, where the *Fairy* had gone to be in readiness to embark her Majesty. The *Victoria and Albert* conveyed her Majesty to Roseneath, anchoring near the residence of the Duke of Argyll, and in the evening Prince Albert joined us in the *Fairy*. On the following day (August 14th) her Majesty and the Royal family proceeded in the *Fairy*, and landed at Glasgow *en route* to Balmoral. The *Victoria and Albert* was detained at Greenock for the repair of the entablature until the 24th, when we proceeded to Portsmouth, landing the royal luggage at Cowes on our way.

It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm with which the people received the Queen throughout this tour, in Ireland as well as in Scotland. At Cork the whole county was ablaze with bonfires, the ships dressed and illuminated, and the harbour crowded with an enthusiastic people. The town itself was so thronged that passage was difficult. In Dublin, the sight of her Majesty, the Prince, and the Royal children, rendered the people almost frantic to display their loyalty, and the whole city was *en fête*, especially on the day of the levée,

when carriages filled every street—some of them extraordinary to look upon as to form and fashion, not to say coachmen, footmen, and inmates.

I should mention that in the heavy weather whilst crossing, which has been named, after shipping some very heavy seas, a quantity of water was collected on the lee-side of the deck, into which a lurch of the vessel threw H.R.H. Prince Alfred. The captain, senior lieutenant, and myself saw the accident from the bridge, and immediately started to get him out. The young Prince was admirably cool. He said, "My hat is in the water, let me get it out." But this Lord Adolphus would not permit. It was recovered by Lieutenant Vansittart.

In 1850 I published a work entitled "Remarks on the English Channel," a copy of which was sent to the Admiralty, and to the Trinity House, London, when the following letters of acknowledgment were received. I may add that the work extended to its sixth edition in 1863, and was used as the text-book at the Trinity House for the examination in pilotage. Copies of each edition were taken by the Trinity House, and also by the Admiralty for use in H.M. vessels of war.

"ADMIRALTY, 10*th May*, 1850.

"SIR,

"I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to express to you their thanks for your work on the 'English Channel,' which you transmitted to their lordships.

"(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON.

"Mr. Biddlecombe."

"TRINITY HOUSE, LONDON,
"10*th March*, 1850.

"SIR,

"I am requested by the Corporation of the Trinity House to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, accompanied with a copy of the book of your 'Remarks on the English Channel,' and to request that you will cause twelve copies thereof to be sent to me.

"(Signed) J. HERBERT,
"Secretary.

"G. Biddlecombe, Esq."

In 1850 I published an elaborate work on "Naval Tactics," dedicated by permission to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, granted in the following letter:—

"ADMIRALTY, 30*th April*, 1850.

"SIR,

"Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 23rd

instant, transmitting a copy of your work on 'Naval Tactics,' I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that they have much pleasure in complying with your request to dedicate this work to them.

"(Signed) J. PARKER.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe."

On June 24th, 1850, we embarked H.R.H. Prince George of Cambridge, H.S.H. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Sir Joseph Copley, Sir George Wombwell, and Colonel Tyrwhitt, on board the *Victoria and Albert*, and left Portsmouth for Portugal; but Prince George took leave of us at the Needles and returned. We touched at Plymouth for coal, and left at 8 P.M. on the 26th of June, arriving off Belem Castle in the Tagus at 3.10 P.M. on the 29th; the shortest passage on record. Here we were joined by H.S.H. Prince Ernest of Leiningen, a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and on the 3rd July proceeded to Gibraltar—where the Governor gave us a grand ball—and on to Cadiz. At Cadiz, Prince Edward and party landed to visit Seville, and many Spanish noblemen and ladies came off to the royal yacht in spite of the difficulty caused by the heavy swell and awkward boats. We returned to Lisbon, and from Lisbon to Vigo, and on to Corunna, where we remained two days;

the Captain-General, with an immense staff, coming off to pay his respects. From Corunna we sailed for Ferrol, the extensive arsenal of which makes it a most important place. The Superintendent, a former Minister of War, came on board, and took great interest in examining every part of the royal yacht. From Ferrol we proceeded to Bordeaux, which we reached after a detention of two days' quarantine at the mouth of the Garonne. Here numberless boats with ladies and gentlemen surrounded the yacht; but, owing to a want of arrangement on the part of the commanders, few got on board; and to add to the misery and disappointment of the ladies, who had armed themselves with cards from H.B.M. Consul, a pelting downfall of rain completely drenched them. From Bordeaux we went on to Brest, and thence to Cherbourg, and from that place steamed across the Channel on a beautifully calm day (August 31st) to Portsmouth, at the rate of 13½ knots, nearly 16 miles, a speed quite unprecedented.

It had been a most enjoyable trip. I was particularly taken with the scenery around Vigo Bay, where verdant villages and hills with constant variety at every turn make it superior to any on the Spanish coast. At Corunna we visited the spot where lie the remains of Sir John Moore in a garden in an angle of a bastion-wall, beautifully

kept. The city is extensive, and near the entrance stands the Tower of Hercules, an immense edifice, which exhibits a light. I was much pleased also with my visit to Bordeaux. The châteaux and occasional large villages are placed amidst the richest conceivable cultivation, which, indeed, covers the banks of the river to the water's edge. The lion of the place, the bridge, is extremely handsome, and the city has splendid buildings, which include a large theatre and very ancient cathedral. The promenades are delightful, but very necessary, for the heat in summer is very great. The extensive fortifications at Blaye, I thought, seemed falling to decay. At Brest the authorities were very attentive, and enabled us to see everything in the extensive dockyard, in which the storehouses are well arranged, but the labour principally performed by convicts.

Prince Ernest of Leiningen left us at Bordeaux, and was then pleased to accept from me copies of my three published nautical works. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, when he left us at Portsmouth, expressed himself much gratified with the trip; and Captain Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence requested me to prepare a statement of the vessel's performances and a track-chart for her Majesty. When I had completed my work his lordship

presented it to the Prince Consort, and, further, expressed to me his entire satisfaction with the manner in which I had navigated the royal yacht, and with my knowledge of the coasts of Spain and Portugal; and requested me to give him copies of my published books, "Art of Rigging" and "Naval Tactics," for presentation to the Prince Consort. This I did with great pleasure, and was afterwards informed that the books had been accepted.

The very day after our return I was laid up with fever and taken home, where I remained some time. In consequence I could not proceed in the royal yacht with the Queen to Ostend; but on the return of the vessel, some three weeks afterwards, I had sufficiently recovered to rejoin.

At this time occurred one of those disagreeable incidents which few in the service altogether escape. The Captain was on leave on the Continent, and the Commander only was in charge. The latter had always been jealous of me, doing what he could to annoy me, from the first day of my joining the royal yacht. Now, he, being a Roman Catholic, issued an order which interfered with my going to Church. As the Captain did not come to Portsmouth, I thought it desirable to write and state my grievances—the annoyances received from

the Commander. This I did on the 9th October, and received the following reply:—

"I shall be at Portsmouth shortly, when anything you may have to state shall be looked into."

About three weeks afterwards Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence came to Portsmouth, and requested the Commander and myself to meet him at his brother's residence, when the letter I had written was read. His lordship, after expressing himself much satisfied in regard to the performance of my duties, remarked, "If I send this letter to the Admiralty it will do neither of you any good. I must beg of you to become friends; and, as I have got another lieutenant appointed, you" (referring to me) "will only be on board in the daytime and permitted to go to Church every Sunday, as there is no chaplain attached to the yacht; and I hope you will now work satisfactorily together." I assured him that this had been my aim from the day I joined the royal yacht. For a short time the Commander behaved more consistently towards me, but I soon found he was waiting his opportunity to upset me. I therefore determined, as the yacht was to be paid off at the end of the year as usual, not to apply to the Admiralty for reappointment; but on the 4th of January, 1851, wrote an official letter, in answer to which I got the following:—

"ADMIRALTY, *7th January*, 1851.

"SIR,

"I have received and laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 4th instant, requiring an appointment to a dockyard, and I am commanded by their lordships to acquaint you that a note has been made of your good service.

"(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe,
Master, R.N."

I heard, also, in reference to this affair, from my old Commander-in-Chief, Sir Charles Napier, who wrote to me in his customary cheery way:—

"*January 16th*, 1857.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I always think it my duty to do anything I can for those who sail with me, particularly when they are oppressed; and nothing will give me greater pleasure than to hear of your getting a good appointment.

"Yours very truly,
"(Signed) CHAS. NAPIER."

On the 17th of February, 1851, I joined H.M.S. *St. George*, the guardship in ordinary at Devonport, bearing the broad pendant of Com-

modore the Right Honourable Lord John Hay, C.B., and was employed in the dockyard and in navigating vessels from port to port in the Channel.

It being generally supposed that vacancies would soon occur for the appointment of Master-Attendant at some of the dockyards, I wrote to Admiral Sir Charles Napier to assist me in obtaining such an appointment, receiving his reply as follows:—

"*May 22nd*, 1851.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"Sir Francis Baring and Admiral Dundas keep those appointments to themselves (the other Lords know nothing about them); and you know I am not on terms with either of them, but you had better write to Milne and Eden. I saw the Prince the other day; he is your friend.

"Yours truly,

"CHAS. NAPIER."

Lord John Hay was promoted to Rear-Admiral on the 25th of August, 1851, and died two days after. He was succeeded by Commodore Michael Seymour.

My nephew, Thomas Edward Biddlecombe, having passed his examination, was at this time appointed Master's Assistant to H.M.S. *Sans-*

pareil, Captain Dacres, the first constructed line-of-battle ship in the service.

A petition for the improvement of the position of a Master in the Royal Navy having been prepared by a large number of the class, I was selected from the body to present it to the Admiralty. I accordingly presented it to Admiral Hornby in November, 1852, when the committee resolved unanimously "That a vote of thanks be tendered to Mr. George Biddlecombe, the honorary secretary to the central committee of Masters, for his unwearied exertions."

When I served in the *Belzoni*, a vessel carrying four lower masts, so far back as the year 1827, I had noticed the advantages the rig offered to very long vessels of war. I now elaborated a plan for four-masted vessels; the two central masts to be of the same size, which would avoid the carrying of a number of spare spars and sails. I submitted it to Commodore Seymour and several practical officers, who were thoroughly in its favour. I was therefore induced to send the plans to the Senior Naval Lord, Sir Hyde Parker. This was the answer:—

"ADMIRALTY, *May 2nd*, 1853.

"SIR,

"I have received the papers containing your plans for changing the rig of screw ships of

the line, which I can not at all approve of. They are returned herewith.

"(Signed) HYDE PARKER.

"Mr. G. Biddlecombe."

It is only fair to say that other members of the Board, and the Controller, did not concur in this decided rejection. But having premised so much—I think I may fairly add that no better commentary could be offered upon the small encouragement given to all suggestions by those of circumscribed ideas. I received this note in 1853, and to-day vessels of four and even five masts have been long accepted as necessary improvements.

When H.M.S. *St. George* was paid off, on the 16th of February, 1854, and the Commodore Superintendent's flag transferred to H.M.S. *Royal William*, I was appointed to the latter vessel, and held the appointment until I had the extreme gratification to receive that of Master of the Fleet for the Baltic.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MASTER OF THE BALTIC FLEET IN 1854.

Appointed Master of the Baltic Fleet—Gratifying reception at the Admiralty—Sail for the flagship—War declared—Cannot obtain pilots—I examine the coast near Sweaborg—Russian compliments—A deserted village—Approval of survey by the Admiralty—Act as our own pilots—Examine the anchorage near Hango—Take H.M.S. *Dragon* into and out of fire—Anxiety of the fleet to come to close quarters—Examine the anchorage of Baro Sound—I pilot the fleet in—Close examination of Sweaborg—Select an anchorage in Storomiolo channel—We offer the Russians a chance—Not accepted—I report feasibility of attack—Preparations—Arrival of our allies—Great disappointment at change of plan—International courtesy—Ill effect of the responsibilities of my position—My services appreciated—I reconnoitre Cronstadt Roads—Supposed infernal machine—Appearance of Cronstadt—My early opinion of impossibility of attacking it—Assist the French flagship—My report on Baro Sound—Reply of the Admiralty—Examine the Bomarsund channel—Decided to attack the place—Bombardment of Bomarsund—General Baraguay d'Hilliers—On board the *Penelope* in trouble—Safely towed off—Fall of Bomarsund—General Bodisco—Appearance of the place—An excursion inland—Sir C. Napier's report—Letter from the Admiralty—Reconnoitre the Bay of Revel—Another reconnaissance of Sweaborg—Success now improbable—In Kiel Harbour—Trip to Berlin—Return to Spithead—Decline re-appointment—Letters from Sir C. Napier and Admiral Parry.

I WAS at Devonport when, in March, 1854, I was directed to proceed to the Admiralty. On my arrival I was received by the First Lord, Sir James Graham, and informed by him that the Board had

appointed me Master of the Fleet for the Baltic. Several members of the Board, and with them Admiral Beaufort, the Hydrographer, then came into the room, and warmly congratulated me. The whole affair was most gratifying.

When we were again alone, Sir James Graham gave me some confidential communications for Admiral Sir Charles Napier; and then told me that I might return to Devonport to take leave of my wife, and that he would order H.M.S. *Desperate* from Ireland to call at Devonport to take me to the *Duke of Wellington*, Sir Charles Napier's flagship. I embarked in the *Desperate* in Plymouth Sound, on March 15th; but on reaching Spithead the vessel was detained because of the lax discipline on board, and I was sent on board H.M.S. *Boscawen*. But she, too, was obliged, when Dover was reached, to anchor on account of the calm, and H.M. steamship *Gorgon*, Commander Arthur Canning, came from Portsmouth and took me on to the Cattegat, anchoring at Copenhagen on the 29th March, where we communicated with Mr. Buchanan, H.M. Minister. Starting next morning, we proceeded through the Drogden Channel, and anchoring off Dars Point for the night, were off again at daylight to intercept the Baltic Fleet, which we did at noon on the 31st. I at once went on board the *Duke of Wellington*, and

was most cordially received by Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Commodore Michael Seymour, Mr. Ozzard, the Secretary—with all of whom I had served before—as also by the Master, my old school-fellow, Mr. Moriarty. On April 1st the fleet came to anchor in Kioge Bay.

On the 4th of April, 1854, war was declared with Russia. I proceeded with the Commander-in-Chief and his secretary in H.M.S. *Cruiser* to Copenhagen, it being thought very desirable to have pilots for the fleet for the Gulf of Finland. We were unsuccessful; not one could be had. We, however, procured provisions and water for the Fleet. Whilst at Copenhagen I visited the church so much injured during the bombardment by Lord Nelson, and other places of interest; and we were very hospitably entertained by Mr. Buchanan. On again reaching the flagship, we sailed, on the 12th of April, with the whole fleet, and off the Island of Gottland the ships were distributed so as effectively to blockade the Russian channels and ports.

On April 17th a squadron of sailing ships, under Admiral Corry, having been left at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland, the *Duke of Wellington*, with a squadron of steam vessels, proceeded towards Sweaborg, intending to examine the locality. But during the night the ships of the lee-line got so

much to leeward and out of their station, that the Commander-in-Chief decided the risk of cruising with a squadron was too great, and proceeded out of the Gulf. Fortunately I prevailed upon him to permit me to examine the coast. In consequence I went on board H.M.S. *Leopard*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Plumridge, taking with me Mr. Evans, Master of the *Lightning*, and returned up the Gulf, where we met the *Hecla*, Captain William H. Hall. In the *Hecla* we examined the inner channels, whilst the *Leopard* remained outside, to give assistance in event of the enemy attacking us.

We succeeded in obtaining all necessary soundings at Hango, and then proceeded to Yassira, and returned along the coast to the Island of Oto, where we landed to reconnoitre. At Hango the Russians had fired several ineffective shots at us, but at Oto we found the village had only just been deserted, one infirm old man representing the population. This was the first place at which the English landed after the declaration of war. Our work done we rejoined the fleet, then at Elgsnabben, in Sweden, some twenty miles from Stockholm. I had been well satisfied with our examination of the coast of the Gulf of Finland; and it was gratifying to find my work highly approved by the Commander-in-Chief. He thanked me officially, and

forwarded my survey to the Admiralty. It was at once published, and I received the following concerning it:—

"HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE, ADMIRALTY,
"*June 13th*, 1854.

"DEAR SIR,

"Although I have sent to Sir Charles Napier sufficient copies of your hints and remarks for navigating the Gulf of Finland, for distribution to all his fleet, yet I cannot omit paying you the well-merited compliment of enclosing a few to you, from whom they originated, and which no one navigating that sea should be without. All further remarks from your pen I shall in like manner immediately print and distribute.

"(Signed) F. BEAUFORT,
"Hydrographer.

"Mr. G. Biddlecombe, R.N.,
"Master of the Fleet."

Gales, snow-storms, and fogs kept us at Elgsnabben until the 5th of May. Then, on our passage out, a dense fog came on and continued; so dense, indeed, that it was almost a miracle some of the vessels did not get on shore. The pilots who were on board some of the ships were of no use whatever. The success was entirely due to the care of the captains, and particularly to the ability

of the masters acting as pilots, whose careful examination overcame the extreme difficulty of the navigation.

On May 20th I piloted the *Blenheim*, with the flag of Rear-Admiral Chads, into the anchorage of Hango, and returning, took the *Duke of Wellington* in also, when the rest of the squadron followed. The following day I examined the anchorage close to the fort, and on the 23rd I took charge of H.M. steamship *Dragon*, Captain Wilcox, to an anchorage well within range of the fort, when she opened fire. The enemy got some big guns into position, and returned our fire, killing a marine and wounding several men. Meantime I had returned in my boat to the flagship; and when the Commander-in-Chief saw the Russians firing at the *Dragon*, he ordered me to return and bring her from under the fire, which I did. He did not think the place important enough to send other vessels in to attack it, especially as the Russian fleets at Sweaborg and Cronstadt were ready in the event of any of our ships being disabled.

On May 25th two deserters from the Russian gunboats came on board the flagship, and gave a terrible account of their treatment, stating that the whole population was forcibly taken for the army and navy. Nothing could exceed Sir Charles Napier's energy and anxiety to attack the Russian

fleet. Every officer and man in the fleet, too, was anxious that the enemy should come out, and every exertion was made to have each ship as efficient as possible; but all the information obtained showed that there was no possibility whatever that they would put to sea and give us the chance.

On June 2nd I went on board the *Desperate*, Captain D'Eyncourt, and with other steamers steamed to Baro Sound, an anchorage very imperfectly known. Having steamed round it, and carefully sounded everywhere, placing two vessels at particular positions near rocks, I returned to the *Duke of Wellington*, which, with the fleet, had come up to the offing, and took charge of her to the anchorage near Renskar Lighthouse; the whole of the fleet safely following. I at once set to work, assisted by the masters in the fleet, to make a survey of the anchorage, which, when completed, was forwarded by the Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty.

As it was extremely desirable to ascertain the state of the enemy's fleet at Sweaborg, I started on the 5th of June, accompanied by several of the masters, in H.M.S. *Porcupine*, through the intricate inner channels near the place. We obtained a satisfactory view of the fleet. On our appearance crowds assembled near the batteries, which,

however, did not open on us. At night we returned through the same intricate channels; but though we were satisfied that there was no serious difficulty in the navigation, time did not permit us either to ascertain the depth of the water, or to look for a good anchorage for the fleet.

On June 9th the squadron proceeded to sea under Sir Charles Napier, and on the 12th we sailed to an anchorage in the Gulf, about eight miles north of Sweaborg. Here I proceeded in the steamship *Bulldog*, with the *Basilisk* and *Driver* as escort, to reconnoitre the anchorage at Sweaborg and fix upon a temporary anchorage for the fleet. There were no leading marks whatever; but entering between the shoals, by cautiously sounding and taking observations, we managed to get safely in shore of the island of Storo-miolo, about a mile and a half south of Sweaborg. The excitement on shore was extraordinary. The masts of the Russian men-of-war lying inside Bokholmen were crowded for the view over the lowland; and on the heights, ladies with their parasols came to look at the squadron of English steam-vessels, which they conceived might commence firing at any moment. Lieutenant John Cowell, R.E., was with me in the *Bulldog*, and made some admirable sketches. One of them, which he gave me, I still have as a memento of the time.

The conclusion I came to was, that nothing could be done in attack by large vessels, but that steamers might have shelled the Russian fleet over the lowland; and that by so doing some of them, together with some of the storehouses, might have been set on fire, and so have been forced to move from the anchorage they occupied in their own harbour. I made my examination and report; and after consultation with the senior officers of the fleet, the Commander-in-Chief decided that next morning the squadron should go into the anchorage. But it was not to be. Captain Sullivan in the *Lightning* arrived in the night, reporting the French fleet at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland. Courtesy prevailed: and to my utter disgust and disappointment, at daybreak we left our anchorage to meet our allies off Baro Sound.

Here we all went in and anchored, and the ceremonies of alliance took place. I was introduced to Admiral Perceval Deschanes, and to Rear-Admiral Penaud, and explained to them the examination of my proposed channel to Sweaborg. It was considered highly important; and a copy, with my instructions for entering the channel, and for the anchorage inside Storo-miolo, was sent by Sir Charles Napier to the Admiralty. On the 18th June I went again close to Sweaborg in

H.M.S. *Gorgon*, and examined the anchorage, returning the same day; and on the 22nd the combined fleet left Baro Sound for the Gulf of Finland, anchoring on the 24th at the Island of Seskar.

It is scarcely needful to say that this had been a most trying time to me. The anxiety of navigating so large a fleet in a channel so narrow and intricate, night and day, was too much for me; and when Seskar was safely reached I was taken very ill, and for a couple of days could not leave my cabin. On the 26th, however, I was able to get on deck, when we proceeded off Cronstadt, anchoring six miles below it, and could see the Russian fleet lying behind the immense fortifications. Whilst I was ill, the kindness of Sir Charles Napier, Admiral Seymour, Captain Gordon, in fact of all, was unbounded; and when we anchored off Cronstadt, Admiral Seymour (the Captain of the Fleet) highly complimented me on the skill shown in navigating the fleet to that important position without the aid of pilots. It was satisfactory to find that one's services were appreciated.

By the Commander-in-Chief's orders I took H.M. steamship *Driver* to reconnoitre Cronstadt Roads. When the observation was completed, my attention was attracted by something having

all the appearance of an infernal machine. Next day in the *Driver* I returned with Admiral Chads, and carefully approached our infernal machine, which, however, proved to be after all nothing but a harmless necessary buoy-beacon. A Russian war-steamer, on which, it was said, was the Grand Duke Constantine, steamed towards us; but finding we were determined to await her attack, she prudently turned back into the inner harbour. The plated spire and dome of a large church in Cronstadt shone out beautifully when the rays of the sun caught it. We could make out that the government works, dockyard, barracks, &c., were very extensive; and admired very much the Oranienbaum Palace on the south shore opposite the citadel, a splendid building in the Turkish style. A sketch of the scene and incident was drawn by Mr. O. W. Brierly, who was with us, the original of which he gave me; and the following extract is from a letter of Admiral Chads:—

"H.M.S. 'EDINBURGH,' *28th June*, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"If any infernal machines are seen, a hawser with two boats should pass around it, then another hawser from the steamer should be made fast to the bight, and hove up by it, to examine it. On this service observe the ut-

most caution, or serious loss of life may be the consequence.

"Always yours most truly,

"HENRY D. CHADS.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

My explanation of the fortifications of Cronstadt, and of the anchorage was examined by Admirals Sir Charles Napier, Chads, and Seymour, and from its clearness gave them much satisfaction. But it will be very appropriate to introduce here a remark of my own in a letter to my wife, dated June 28th, 1854, as it clearly shows the opinion I had then formed—as follows :—

"We just got sight of the cathedral dome, St. Petersburg, when reconnoitring at Cronstadt. Do not make yourself at all uncomfortable about the war, for I feel satisfied the Russians will never come out, either at this place or Sweaborg, for we have a squadron off there under Admiral Corry. We fired a royal salute to-day, it being the Queen's Coronation Day, which must have been heard at St. Petersburg; what would be the feeling in England if a Russian fleet were blockading the river Thames and saluting."

The weather was so intolerably hot, and the cholera so prevalent amongst the seamen, that the fleet proceeded to Seskar, a low sandy island

covered with trees, with a large deserted village, where we remained until the 5th of July, when the allied fleet proceeded to Baro Sound. Here, on entering the anchorage, the *Duguesclin*, French line-of-battle ship, bearing the flag of Admiral Penaud, ran ashore on a rock at the entrance, which I had buoyed with a masked buoy. Unfortunately it (the buoy) had broken adrift in a gale, and the surveying officers had replaced it considerably more in shore than the position in which I had moored it. I was sent to the *Duguesclin* with vessels to assist in floating her. By the excellent management of Admiral Penaud, we lightened her eight hundred tons during the night, and in the morning, when she floated, we towed her to the inner anchorage. Admiral Penaud presented me to the French Commander-in-Chief, and warmly thanked me for my services.

I handed the survey of Baro Sound to the Commander-in-Chief with the following letter:—

"H.M.S. 'DUKE OF WELLINGTON,'
"BARO SOUND, *22nd July*, 1854.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to forward herewith the survey of the entrance of Baro Sound, and anchorage up to Renskar, and beg leave to state that it was constructed by me from materials collected by myself and several of the masters and

second masters of the fleet. Those who materially assisted were—Masters: Mr. Stokes, H.M.S. *Neptune;* Mr. Raynes, *St. Jean d'Acre;* Mr. Allen, *Hague;* Mr. Moriarty, *Duke of Wellington;* Mr. Bodie, *Boscawen;* Mr. Scott, *Impérieuse;* and Mr. Brown, *Cressy.* And Second Masters: Mr. G. H. Hill, *James Watt;* Mr. Hill, *Royal George;* and Mr. Bradley, *Cumberland.*

"(Signed) GEORGE BIDDLECOMBE,
"Master of the Fleet.

"Vice-Admiral
"Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B."

The chart was duly forwarded by the Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty, together with that of the inshore part northward of Renskar, which had been surveyed by Captain Otter, and the two were published in one complete sheet by the Admiralty; when the following letter, addressed to the Commander-in-Chief, was sent to me, for the information of the masters and second masters of the fleet.

"ADMIRALTY, 1*st August*, 1854.

"SIR,

"I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd ultimo, enclosing a chart of Baro Sound, by Mr. George Biddle-

combe, Master of the Fleet, assisted by several masters and second masters from ships in the fleet under your command, and I am happy to signify their directions to you; to express to these officers the approbation of their lordships of this survey, acquainting them, as a mark of their Lordships' approval, the Board have promoted Mr. Graham Hewett Hill, second master of the *James Watt*, to the rank of master.

"(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON.

"Vice-Admiral

"Sir Charles Napier."

In August the bombardment and capture of Bomarsund took place.

On hearing that a French military force had embarked for the Baltic, the allied fleet proceeded on the 18th July to the south of the Aland Islands, and having examined the anchorage of Ledsund, a portion proceeded there, whilst Rear-Admiral Martin, with a division, was left to blockade the Gulf of Finland. Sir Charles Napier directed me to proceed, with some of the masters, to examine the intricate channel of Bomarsund; and our conclusion was, that even the *Duke of Wellington* could be taken up it—for though narrow and intricate, there was a good depth of water, rendering it readily navigable by steam-vessels. The

French troops arriving shortly afterwards, a council of war was held, and arrangements made to proceed to Bomarsund in men-of-war and transports, when I took charge of the largest vessel, the *Prince*, having two thousand one hundred troops on board.

Sir Charles Napier, with the Captain of the Fleet and his secretary, shifted his flag to H.M. steamship *Bulldog*, and with several vessels proceeded to Bomarsund, leaving the others at Ledsund as a reserve. Early on the 8th of August, the French troops, under the command-in-chief of General Baraguay d'Hilliers, landed at several places south of the Bomarsund forts; whilst the English marines, under Brigadier-General James, R.E., passed through the North channel, and closed in towards the same point. The men-of-war under Rear-Admiral Plumridge had previously drawn a cordon round the island, which most effectively fulfilled its purpose—to hinder any support reaching the enemy. The islanders, it should be said, assisted us, to the best of their ability, whenever not checked by the Russian authorities.

All was now ready for the serious business of war. Everything that the garrison could do to make a gallant defence they had done. They had burned all houses in the line of fire, including a village and the hospital on the opposite island of

Presto, where a large circular fort had been erected. Two other circular forts, at an elevation of 200 feet, increased the strength of the principal fort. On the first day, however, all that happened was a skirmish between our advanced guard and the Russians, the enemy being driven into their forts. I was sent, with Captain Chads, to the camp of General Baraguay d'Hilliers to deliver a letter from Sir Charles Napier. The General received us with much cordiality, and gave us some claret out of his flask, making use of the top for a glass—"his cocked hat," he called it.

When I again reached the *Bulldog*, Sir Charles Napier desired me to select some masters and go that night close to the principal fort to reconnoitre. We had, fortunately, just completed our examination of the anchorage, had placed buoys on the shoals, and were not more than five hundred yards from the fort, when we were observed, the enemy's riflemen opening fire from the beach, whilst shells came from the fort. One of the latter burst over my boat, and two pieces of it stove the boat and cut the clothes of two of the crew. Fortunately, this was the extent of the damage; and as we had done what we wanted to do, we returned on board.

Next morning (the 9th) firing commenced in the Presto Channel, eastward of Bomarsund; but

when I piloted the *Bulldog* there the enemy had disappeared. But the Admiral, being desirous to place a vessel near the south part of the channel—with the twofold object, to protect the channel and to engage a few guns of the principal fort which fired in that direction—ordered me to take charge of the *Penelope*, and anchor her in a certain position, where several officers had reported there was deep water. Very fortunately we had just reduced speed, for we shoaled from seven fathoms, and touched the ground. We reversed engines to no purpose, and the forts opened fire upon us.

In this strait, Captain Caffin, to lighten and so save the ship, had the guns thrown overboard—first buoying them, so that they were recovered. The boilers were blown out, and the shot and stores put into other vessels which had come from the fleet under the orders of Admiral Plumridge; and then the *Hecla* secured a hawser to the *Penelope*, and triumphantly towed her afloat again. The enthusiasm of the fleet when they saw her come off from under fire was unbounded; and no doubt it was a great achievement to save the vessel from the very teeth of the enemy's batteries. The hull of the vessel was seriously damaged, two men were killed, and three seriously wounded, besides others wounded in the boats. We were nearly three hours under severe fire;

yet the greatest coolness and order prevailed throughout, or the vessel could not have been saved.

The troops succeeded in reducing one of the circular forts, which immediately blew up, from a shell thrown into it. The second circular fort was attacked by the English seamen and marines. They dragged guns up to an extraordinary height, so as to command the place; and, though the walls were solid stone, four feet thick, with inner walls, a trench sufficient to drive a coach through, was made by three guns only. This was done by constantly firing at one spot; it was a grand sight, and astonished ourselves almost as much as the enemy. These successes gave the opportunity to the allied fleet to fire for a few days at the principal fort, to which they did considerable injury. It fell to me to place the vessels in position, when my boat attracted considerable attention, and shot and shell fell around me to my heart's content.

On noon of the 16th of August, when the vessels opened fire, a flag of truce was held out from the fort, and the order given on our side to cease firing. Then Captain Hall, of the *Bulldog*, the temporary flagship, was sent to the fort, when the enemy announced that they surrendered unconditionally. When the gates of the fortress were

opened to us, I was fortunate enough to accompany Sir Charles Napier and the other admirals of the fleet, with General Baraguay d'Hilliers and his staff, to receive the Russian commander's surrender of fortress and men.

It was an imposing military spectacle. Munitions of war were lying on every side; the troops were greatly excited, muskets occasionally popping off: and when the allied officers entered the fortress, there was a grand flourish of trumpets. When the unfortunate commandant, General Bodisco, appeared, all uncovered. The gallant old man was quite seventy years of age, and was addressed by General Baraguay d'Hilliers—himself a perfect soldier in appearance, and a veteran also; he had lost his left hand in Napoleon's ill-fated expedition to Russia.

"General," he said, "you surrender to the allied forces?"

"Yes," replied Bodisco; and added, "I trust I have defended the fortress with honour."

"Monsieur le Général," was the Frenchman's rejoinder as he put on his cap, and took the other by the hand; "I consider that you have defended the honour of your country to the utmost, and I therefore declare that you are to keep your sword." Continuing his address, he added that on the next day an assault would have been made, in which

inevitably there would have been great loss of life.

An hour after the capitulation, I piloted the *Leopard*, bearing the flag of Admiral Plumridge, to Bomarsund wharf to embark the prisoners, of whom some two thousand were taken; and the same evening they left for the ships lying at Ledsund. This could not be done without causing many heartrending scenes. It was, indeed, pitiful to see the ladies with their children taking leave of husbands and fathers; and to add to their grief, they were homeless, their houses having been burned by order of their own commander.

Thus in eight days these forts, of immense importance to the enemy and considered by them to be invulnerable, were reduced. The fortress was afterwards entirely destroyed by the Royal Engineers, and was used by the vessels as a target to try the effect of shot and shell. A captain of one of H.M. ships in the fleet, who knew me from witnessing much of my exertions, wrote me the following letter, accompanying it with the present of a reading-lamp:—

"I think it will puzzle their Lordships to offer a suitable reward to a master of twenty years' standing, in whom head, heart, courage, daring, science, all are combined; and for that long period has served his country with an equal share of fidelity,

energy, and ability. Whatever may be that reward, whatever may be your triumph, I need not tell you, how truly my heart wishes you may long live to enjoy it."

After the capture of the place, we made several excursions into the country, and were always well received by the authorities. On one occasion our chaplain, the Rev. W. L.. Onslow, and myself, having secured a pony carriage and taking our luncheon-basket with us, drove to the church of St. Bridget's. The parish has some twelve hundred inhabitants; a hardy race living on rye-bread, milk, and potatoes, and only rarely tasting meat. The cattle, and the sheep as well, are small, although the pasturage is good. We saw a few pigs, but no poultry. The priest, a Lutheran, received us with much friendliness and conducted us over church and churchyard, both well kept, and the archdeacon of the church, who had a very nice chateau, invited us to luncheon; but as our object was to see the character of the island generally, we preferred our own plan, and went on. A large portion is arable, and we found it generally well cultivated and watered and with good roads. On returning, when getting into the boat at the jetty, a plank gave way under me, and precipitated me headfirst into the water, one leg being held fast in the jetty. I had a narrow

escape of drowning; for without the help of those near me I do not think I could possibly have freed myself. As we got on board ship again, a heavy gale came on; and the *Dugueselin* drove and carried away our dolphin-striker.

Admiral Sir Charles Napier was pleased to address the following letter to the Admiralty.

"'DUKE OF WELLINGTON,' LEDSUND,
"15*th August*, 1854.

"SIR,

"In transmitting to their Lordships the inclosed report from Mr. Biddlecombe, Master of the Fleet, accompanied by his survey of this anchorage, which has been prepared from the work of the masters and second masters under his direction, I take the opportunity of bringing under their Lordships' favourable notice the valuable services that have been rendered by the Master of the Fleet and the masters generally; naming particularly Messrs. Moriarty, Raynes, Allen, Hill, and Blakey, who were employed at Bomarsund in sounding under the batteries, and on various other occasions throughout the operations the exertions of these officers have been characterized by the greatest energy and ability, and I feel it a duty to add, that, without the aid of pilots (who were not to be obtained), the intricate and dangerous navigation of these seas has been

overcome by the unremitting exertions and skill of the surveying officers, and the Master of the Fleet, and the masters of her Majesty's ships, Messrs. Ball and Swaine, deserve notice.

"(Signed) CHARLES NAPIER,
"Commander-in-Chief.

"To the Secretary,
"Admiralty."

"'DUKE OF WELLINGTON,' NARGEN,
"*11th October*, 1854.

"(General Memorandum.)

"I have much satisfaction in communicating the following letter I have received from the Admiralty, expressing their Lordships' entire approval of the exertions and talent displayed by Mr. George Biddlecombe, Master of the Fleet, on all occasions on which he has been reported to their Lordships, as well as the conduct of the masters in general.

"(Signed) CHARLES NAPIER,
"Commander-in-Chief.

"To the respective Captains, Com-
"manders, Master of the Fleet,
"and Masters of H.M. Ships."

"ADMIRALTY, *3rd October*, 1854.

"SIR,

"Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 15th

ultimo, No. 529, transmitting a survey of Ledsund, Aland Islands, by Mr. George Biddlecombe, Master of the Fleet, and masters and second masters of her Majesty's fleet, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that they highly approve of the exertions and talents displayed by Mr. George Biddlecombe on all occasions on which he has been reported to their Lordships, as well as the conduct of the masters in general; and their Lordships are glad to receive the valuable survey executed by Mr. Biddlecombe.

"(Signed) W. A. B. HAMILTON.

"To Vice-Admiral
"Sir Charles Napier."

The weather becoming boisterous, the fleet proceeded to Nargen Roads, near Revel, anchoring there on the 20th September. Two days afterwards I accompanied the Commander-in-Chief and General Jones, R.E., in the steamer *Locust*, to reconnoitre, and found the whole Bay of Revel well defended. Besides an immense battery extending seaward from the town on the mole, and a round tower, the sides of the bay were lined with earthen batteries. It was, undoubtedly, very formidable. We took up a position nearly in the centre of the bay; but the batteries were all manned to give

us a warm welcome, and on all sides mounted officers could be seen flying about; whilst the Domberg, a large citadel-like building, as well as every elevation, was crowded with well-dressed people.

Subsequently, in the steamship *Driver*, I went with the Commander-in-Chief, General Jones, and other officers, to make yet another reconnoissance of Sweaborg. On this occasion, the enemy fired at us when the engines were stopped to enable us to make our comments at our leisure. It was clear that the enemy had commenced to dismantle the men-of-war inside the harbour, but the forts had been very considerably strengthened. In fact, it was now a very different affair to what it had been on my former visit, when I had suggested an attack; so much so, that without mortar-boats it was quite out of the question to attempt anything. This was the opinion generally expressed.

On our return to Nargen, it was determined to send the sailing vessels of the fleet to England, under command of Rear-Admiral Plumridge. The weather soon afterwards became very cold and stormy, and the *Duke of Wellington*, with the other screw line of battle-ships, proceeded to Kiel, where we anchored on the 26th October. My health had suffered much from the constant anxiety; and although in the quiet of this beautiful harbour I

felt infinitely better, it was thought desirable that I should have a few days' change, and Sir Charles Napier at once gave me leave. I went to Hamburg and on to Berlin, and from the latter place returned to my ship after a short stay, bringing a letter for Sir Charles Napier from Lord Adolphus Loftus, secretary to the embassy.

I enjoyed the trip very much, and it greatly improved my health. Whilst at Hamburg I crossed to Harbourg, in Hanover, to visit old Colonel Hugo, who had been in our service. At both places I received much attention, and at Berlin in particular from Madame Spkie, whose daughter had visited the *Duke of Wellington*, and from the Rev. Mr. Bellson, the chaplain to the embassy. Here at the opera I saw the "Dumb Girl of Portici" represented with three hundred performers on the stage, and altogether quite like a fairy scene; but I was most taken with the Egyptian sarcophagi in the new museum, placed as originally found; one in particular—of a high priest of the time of Moses—being perfect. It would take weeks to exhaust the interest of this museum.

Shortly after my return to Kiel, the Captain of the Fleet (Admiral Seymour) left for England in H.M.S. *Princess Royal*, and on leaving expressed every good wish towards me; and on the 7th December, the *Duke of Wellington* and the re-

mainder of the fleet, having on the previous day given a ball to the inhabitants in return for their profuse hospitality, left Kiel for Spithead, where we arrived at 7 p.m. on the 17th. When the flag of Admiral Sir Charles Napier was struck, I, as one of the staff, was placed on half-pay; but when I went to the Admiralty, their Lordships wished me to hold myself in readiness to join as Master of the Fleet in the ensuing campaign. But I had no hesitation in declining, and was, as I desired, continued on half-pay.

The following certificate from the Commander-in-Chief, and letter from Admiral Parry, I received at this time:—

"These are to certify the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that Mr. George Biddlecombe served as Master of the Fleet, on board the *Duke of Wellington*, from the 14th day of March, 1854, to the date hereof; during the whole of which time Mr. Biddlecombe discharged his duties with great ability, zeal, and correctness, and complied with the General Printed Instructions.

"Mr. Biddlecombe is, I think, the best Master of the Fleet I ever saw, and an excellent pilot.

"(Signed) CHAS. NAPIER,

"Vice-Admiral of the Baltic Fleet.

"PORTSMOUTH, 27*th December*, 1854."

"GREENWICH HOSPITAL,
"*20th December*, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I was just out of bed when you kindly called to-day, so that I was unable to see you, which was a great disappointment to me. I should have liked to shake you by the hand after your late campaign. I heartily congratulate you on your safe return, and I hope they mean to keep you in reserve for next summer in the Baltic. I have been suffering from a painful complaint for some months.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"E. W. PARRY.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

CHAPTER XIX.

MY OPINION OF THE BALTIC CAMPAIGN OF 1854: WRITTEN IN 1856.

THAT war with Russia was imminent was clear to all Europe months before it was declared; Russia, during that period, was developing her resources, both naval and military, in preparation for the conflict. Information on all subjects connected with her armaments and forces was kept strictly confidential; so that the other European Governments knew scarcely anything either of her resources or defences. Both at Cronstadt and Sweaborg, the Russians had a large fleet of line-of-battle ships, said to be in every way well equipped and manned; and added to these, were some sixteen steamers of war of different classes, besides a large number of rowing gun-boats.

Strange as it may appear, the British Government, with a resident ambassador at St. Petersburg, is supposed not to have had authentic accounts of the strength of these forces. So great

was their ignorance that they did not know where the Sweaborg fleet wintered; at least Sir Charles Napier was not told. On the other hand, the daily journals of both England and France afforded every information of British and French vessels of war, their armament and determination, which was of the greatest importance to Russia; and besides, as is generally known, there are throughout Europe (and perhaps, it may be added, all over the world) Russian spies who communicate everything of interest to their Government.

An English force, consisting of a powerful class of screw-propelled ships, carrying guns of heavy calibre, with a few steam vessels-of-war, left the Downs in March, 1854, under the command of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, and Rear-Admirals Plumridge and Chads, and Commodore Michael Seymour, Captain of the Fleet. It proceeded to Wingo Sound, in Sweden; and shortly afterwards a squadron of sailing line-of-battle ships, under Rear-Admiral Corry, joined, and the whole fleet passed through the Belts, arriving in Kioge Bay, southward of Copenhagen, on the 1st of April, 1854. Previously to this, H.M. screw corvette *Miranda*, Captain Lyons, had gone into the Gulf of Finland, sighting Revel, his special object being to gain information of the whereabouts and state of the Russian Sweaborg fleet and harbours; but ice

deterred his proceeding further, and he returned to the fleet.

On the 4th of April, the declaration of war was made to the fleet in Kioge Bay. Its presence there, where it was constantly being reinforced by vessels from England, was at the time most important. It had been a question whether Denmark would remain neutral, or take part with Russia; and it cannot be questioned that the early movement of the British fleet to this spot turned the scale to neutrality. Had there been any hesitation on the part of our fleet in reaching Kioge Bay, there would have been time and opportunity for the Russians to have put to sea with their war-steamers through the Sound; and at that time their steam-vessels outnumbered ours. Had the Russians, when they knew war was imminent, sent their large-class steamers to Copenhagen, they might have coerced the government, or have induced Sweden to include the Faro Sound with other closed ports against hostile vessels. This would have been of serious consequence to the allied fleet; for without Faro Sound for colliers, it is likely that many of these would have been lost; and there was also the consideration of the protection which the position afforded to vessels passing west from the Gulf of Finland—it

being in the direct road, and an excellent harbour for refitting.

The Russians, once in the friendly port of Copenhagen, might have coaled and awaited the declaration of war; or passing through the Cattegat before the declaration, might have gone on to the coast of Great Britain, or north about to the Colonies; and this, to say the least of it, would have obliged the English Commander-in-Chief to disunite his forces. And even had they remained at Copenhagen, they would have been safe, as under similar circumstances English ships would have been, in the protection of a neutral power; and in this case, it would have been necessary to have kept, in the Cattegat, a force at least equal to that of the enemy to watch their movements. All this goes to show, as I have said, the immense advantage gained by the early and decided movement of our fleet. The strongholds of Cronstadt and Sweaborg did not require the support of steamers, nor even of ships of the line; and had the Russians shown any energy or determination to engage us openly, they would have made a demonstration in the manner alluded to.

Another opportunity was afforded the Russians when the British fleet went to Elgsnabben before the French vessels arrived. For the Russians had

daily, I may say *hourly*, information (their telegraph running along the coast from St. Petersburg to Hango) of the distribution of the British fleet and its cruisers. Thus they might have passed down the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic with their steam-vessels, with the probability of not meeting more than one or two of the British cruisers, which could not have engaged a force so superior; and the chances were, they would have passed Copenhagen Sound without difficulty, or, as a last resource, could have remained blockaded at Copenhagen instead of in their own ports.

Many chances were given the Russian steam-vessels at Sweaborg to engage the British cruisers singly—the *Basilisk* in particular offering them the opportunity. There was the special occasion, which has been described at p. 230, when in H.M.S. *Bulldog*, accompanied for protection by two other small-class English steamers, I had gone inside the Island of Storo-miolo to examine the channels. Then the Russian steamers, four in number, with steam up could have come out to us with all the advantages of a full knowledge of the intricate navigation. But they permitted the examination to go on without interruption, almost within gun-shot, with the British squadron miles to seaward. Had any move been made by the Russian steam-ships, the chances were that some one of the

English vessels, with the little knowledge we possessed of the intricate navigation amongst the shoals and underlying rocks, would have run on shore in attempting to escape; but no energy was displayed on this or any other occasion in the naval character of Russia's Baltic Fleet.

The allied fleets lay at different anchorages in the Gulf of Finland, Nargen more particularly, where there was every facility to send rafts and other destructive agents by night or in fogs to inflict injury on us; but nothing was even attempted. All the Russians did was to crouch behind their fortifications.

To the want of a small class of steam-vessels, gun and mortar boats in particular, must be attributed the failure, *if it may so be called*, of any great success in the Baltic campaign of 1854. No doubt the impression of the Government at the time was, that war would not ensue; and in the event of its occurring, that a blockade rigidly established would answer every purpose. The blockade, at all events, was thoroughly carried out, in spite of the intricate navigation and inclement weather.

I do not conceive our Government ever entertained the notion that the Russian fleet would put to sea; and in this, at all events, they judged correctly.

There is no doubt that in the middle of April our fleet could have anchored in the Hango Roads. Such an action might have intimidated the enemy so much that, seeing a hostile fleet before them, they would, if summoned, have surrendered the forts. On the other hand, had they held out, it is certainly a question whether it would have been wise to risk the damage of steam line-of-battle ships at that early stage of the war. For in such an event the Russian fleet might have taken courage and come out before our allies arrived; and the French fleet did not reach the Gulf of Finland until the middle of June.

The manner in which the expedition to the Gulf of Bothnia, under the command of Rear-Admiral Plumridge, pursued that intricate navigation in the early season astonished everybody in the fleet; and in all its operations (if we except Gamla Carleby, under Captain Glasse, where perhaps more caution was necessary) it was admirably successful. Various opinions have been expressed as to the destruction of property on the Russian coast in that gulf. I would merely ask, "What would have been the state of any English port or town if the Russians could have entered it?" A second Sinope undoubtedly. The British cruisers did not hesitate to enter any of the Russian ports when desirable; of this Riga, Libau, &c., are instances,

but they always acted with consideration to the inhabitants. The Russians showed no more energy at Bomarsund during our reconnaissance than elsewhere. Had they done so, it was not possible the small steam-vessel *Lightning* could have pursued the most intricate and narrow navigation to it; for a couple of hundred riflemen placed on the tree-covered banks would have stopped our proceedings. Instead of this, we were permitted to satisfy ourselves of the possibility of navigating large vessels up to the anchorage off Bomarsund Fort, when shortly afterwards the *Hecla*, *Valorous*, and *Odin* fired at the fort several hours. Even when these vessels retreated, and after the destruction they had caused, no effort was made to stop the intricate navigation. Had the Russians sunk a few small vessels laden with stone in the narrow channel, it would have impeded it sufficiently to have stopped the ships of the line or vessels of draught. No, the Russians remained satisfied with their fortifications of Bomarsund and the other three forts by which it was flanked, when in August the allied forces proceeded there, and the result is well known. Its importance was fully described in the admirable speech of the Prime Minister (Lord Palmerston) when proposing the vote of thanks in the House of Commons. The destruction of Bomarsund so frightened the Russians in the Baltic

that a few days afterwards they blew up the forts at Hango, reserving all their forces for Sweaborg. The latter place, however, without a class of vessels which we did not then possess, could not have been attacked with a chance of success; and this was abundantly made clear by the bombardment in 1855.

In 1854 a successful attempt on Sweaborg might have been possible under certain conditions. It would have been necessary to land sufficient troops at the island south of the fortifications; as from batteries constructed on the heights there, the place might have been bombarded. But it does not appear that much, if any, assistance could have been given by the large ships of the fleet. They had neither ordnance nor ammunition sufficient for the purpose. Had the suggested landing been attempted, it would have required not only that the military force should be large, but should have been in the Gulf of Finland in May or June, so as to have had time to make the arrangements necessary to enable them to finish the work before August, or, *at the latest*, September. After the latter month the weather becomes so unsettled as to be quite unfit for an undertaking of the kind; and an attacking force would have no remedy but to evacuate. As it is certain that it would have been better not to make

the attempt at all than to fail in it—I am convinced (notwithstanding the different opinions that were given) that it was fortunate the attempt was not made with the forces we had.

The allied fleet went to the anchorage near Cronstadt at the end of June, previously to which a sufficient force was detached, under Rear-Admiral Corry, to engage the Sweaborg fleet, should it make a move. At the same time a strict blockade of the whole Russian coast, from its extreme south part to the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, was kept up. This employed a large force, but so effectually was it preserved that it was not possible for a vessel of any importance to escape the vigilance of the cruisers. The fortifications of Cronstadt do not require explanation here; sketches and drawings of them are in every well-known publisher's window, and I should conceive the British public generally (at all events, those qualified to give an opinion) will readily perceive the impracticability of attacking such a fortress with ships of the line which, from their draught of water, would be kept at so great a distance that their missiles would be next to useless. An attack on Cronstadt on the south side with heavy ships was acknowledged by all to be impracticable. There might, however, in 1854 have been an impression made on its northern

part if the necessary appliances, guns and mortar vessels, had been available. But what, I would ask, could possibly have been done by the fleet, the ammunition of which was only eighty rounds per gun, about eight hours' firing for one broadside? When we contemplate the immense quantity of shot and shell thrown into Sweaborg in 1855, without positive success, we ought to be the more satisfied with the judicious determination arrived at by the allied admirals, to make no attempt on Cronstadt in 1854. It must inevitably have resulted in the fleet having to haul off, as at Sweaborg, and with hardly a chance of inflicting an important injury.

Sir Robert Peel (a Lord of the Admiralty) said that those he consulted at St. Petersburg felt satisfied that if the allied fleets had attacked Cronstadt in 1854 it must have crumbled to ashes. It is all very well to make assertions—but from the inactivity of the Russian Baltic fleet itself, it would, at least, have required much more energy and ability of character than it displayed to have made the attack on Cronstadt. And I do not hesitate to say that the allied Commanders-in-Chief, the French Admiral, and Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, both as gallant officers as any in the naval service of their respective countries, although not very young, were not the

officers likely to let slip the chance of attacking such a place, if there had been a gleam of hope of success; and the honourable distinctions tendered them by their respective Governments must be conclusive of the favourable opinion entertained.

I should say, in concluding this subject, that I sent the above opinions to Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Admiral Sir James Plumridge, Admiral Sir H. D. Chads, and several officers of distinction who had served in the fleet, all of whom concurred in my views. When Captain William Peel was at Devonport fitting out H.M.S. *Shannon*, he called upon me as an old shipmate; for it may be remembered he came to see me in H.M.S. *Talbot* in 1838, when I was the master. After some conversation in reference to the Baltic campaign, I informed him that I had written my opinion of it, and he then asked me to give him the opportunity to read it. On returning it, he observed that he very much regretted what his brother, Sir Robert, had stated in reference to Cronstadt, and that my document had afforded him an immense deal of information.

I ought, perhaps, to add that Sir James Graham, on the 4th of April, 1856, when attacking Sir Charles Napier in the House of Commons in reference to the Baltic campaign, introduced the following

remark to support his views:—"I shall produce to the House of Commons the evidence of Captain Codrington, who commanded the *Talbot* before Acre, was the officer who most closely reconnoitred Acre, *took all the soundings*, and drew the position." I wrote to Sir James Graham at once, on the 7th of April, to draw his attention to a statement I had made to him at his levee at Devonport Yard, to the effect that I had surveyed the bay and banks of Acre, assisted by Mr. Mainprise, the second master of the *Talbot*, and that I had written the directions for avoiding the shoals, the chart of which was published at the Admiralty with my name. I further reminded him that I then showed him a copy of it, and that he had requested me to give it him to keep, which I did.

I received the following reply:—

"HOUSE OF COMMONS,
"*8th April*, 1856.

"SIR,

"In describing Captain Codrington as well qualified to depose to the anchorage around Acre, I by no means reflected on the conduct of the officers under the immediate command of Captain Codrington who aided him in making the survey.

"I well know your merits, and highly value your skill and long services. On the occasion to

which you refer, the character and personal proceedings of Captain Codrington alone came under consideration.

"I am yours very faithfully,

"(Signed) J. G. GRAHAM.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,

"Keyham."

On the 8th of May, 1856, Lord Panmure, in the House of Lords, and Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons, moved a vote of thanks to the Navy for their services in the Baltic, which was unanimously accorded in both Houses of Parliament as follows:—

> "That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the Navy, and Army, and Royal Marines, who have taken part in the operations of the late war, for the meritorious and eminent services which they rendered to the Queen and country during the course of the war."

CHAPTER XX.

ASSISTANT MASTER ATTENDANT IN KEYHAM YARD, 1855-64; MASTER ATTENDANT OF WOOLWICH DOCK-YARD, 1864-7.

Service ashore — Royal visitors at Keyham — Suggest harbour of Refuge at Swanage—Recommend change of lights on the south coast—Reply of the Trinity Brethren—Receive the Baltic medal —Publish work on "Steam Fleet Tactics"—Letter from Prince Adalbert—Letter from Admiral Plumridge—Lecture at the Royal United Service Institution—Letter from Prince de Joinville—At Paris and Cherbourg; meet old allies—The *Conway* training ship—Promoted Commander R.N.—The Grand Duke Michael on the Baltic Fleet—Appointed to the Rigging Committee—Earl Russell — My nephew's promotion — Certificate from Sir Thomas Pasley—Severely injured—Letter from Prince Leiningen —Take charge of H.M.S. *Black Prince*—Appointed to Woolwich Dockyard—My interest in Keyham—Regret on leaving—Death of my wife—Royal visitors at Woolwich; a graceful reminiscence —My plan for slipping dead-eye adopted—Assist in launching H.M.S. *Northumberland*—Second marriage—Sad death of my nephew—Monument erected to him at Norfolk Island—Receive the Military Order of the Bath—Complimentary letters—Promoted to be Staff Captain—Resolve to retire—Letter from the First Sea Lord.

My active life afloat came to an end when I returned from the Baltic in 1854; my next post being that of Assistant Master Attendant at Keyham, to which I was appointed on the 26th of February,

1855. The position was the more pleasant because my old and esteemed friend and companion in the Baltic, Rear-Admiral James Plumridge, was the Admiral Superintendent.

As the incidents of a life on shore can hardly present features of general interest, I must be content to treat of this period of my career in the briefest manner.

On the 14th of August, 1856, the Queen, Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and Princess-Royal came by carriage to Keyham, when, in the absence of the Superintendent, who was expecting them at Devonport Yard, it devolved upon me to receive them. Later, when Admiral Plumridge returned, I was officially presented, when her Majesty and Prince Albert were pleased to speak to me of my service in the *Victoria and Albert.*

At another time I had the honour to take Prince Napoleon over Keyham, when a telegram arrived informing him that the Emperor had been shot at. He received the news with apparent indifference; for merely giving some instructions to his secretary, he leisurely concluded his inspection. Prince Adalbert, Lord High Admiral of Prussia, on one of many visits, accepted from me a copy of my book on "Naval Tactics," and some original notes of mine in reference to steam-vessels. On a later second visit, he spoke to me of the necessity of a

work on Steam Fleet Tactics, which on consideration I resolved to prepare.

In October, 1856, I went to the coast of Dorsetshire, and prepared a statement, showing the difficulty of making the Portland Harbour of Refuge in thick weather, and suggesting that a harbour of refuge and naval station should be made at Swanage. In sending this to the Admiralty I recapitulated the arguments which, in 1846, I had used to Lord Eldon. I received the following reply :—

"ADMIRALTY, *December 23rd*, 1856.

"SIR,

"I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ult., on the subject of the capabilities of Swanage for a harbour of refuge; and I am directed by their Lordships to thank you for the remarks and suggestions therein contained.

"(Signed) B. OSBORNE.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

In the following January (1857) the Royal Mail Steamship *Tyne* being wrecked off the same coast, I visited the vessel, and in consequence addressed a letter to the Corporation of Trinity House, on the subject of the lights in the locality, and of the

position of the Ower's lightship. It was acknowledged in the following :—

"TRINITY HOUSE, LONDON,
"*18th February*, 1857.

"SIR,

"Having brought under the consideration of the Board your letter of the 4th instant, with its several enclosures, submitting remarks on the lights in the neighbourhood of Portland, and suggesting, for the reasons therein stated, that an additional lighthouse be placed on Anvil Point, Durleston Head, I am directed to convey to you the thanks of the Elder Brethren for this communication, and to state that they have reason to hope, when the new tower now in course of erection on the outer Needles Rock is completed, they may be enabled to improve the strength and character of the light to be exhibited therefrom, so as to make it available to a considerable extent for the purposes for which you consider that one on Anvil Point would be useful. I am, however, to add, that your observations on this subject shall receive due consideration.

"I beg to return the enclosures in your letter as requested,

"And am, Sir, your most humble Servant,

"(Signed) P. H. BERTHON

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,
"Keyham Yard."

"TRINITY HOUSE, LONDON,
"*22nd July*, 1857.

"SIR,

"I am directed by the Elder Brethren to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst., suggesting a different alteration of the position of the Ower's Light-vessel from that which is intended, and to acquaint you that the same shall receive consideration.

"(Signed) P. H. BERTHON.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,
"Keyham."

In 1857 I received the Baltic Medal, awarded me for services as Master of the Baltic Fleet in 1854; and having completed the work I have named on "Steam Fleet Tactics," I published it on the 5th of November of that year, dedicating it to my old and esteemed Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Charles Ogle, Bart. He acknowledged this in an expressive note. I forwarded copies to the Admiralty and to H.R.H. Prince Alfred, and in reply received the following letters :—

"ADMIRALTY, *3rd December*, 1857.

"SIR,

"I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acknowledge the

receipt of your letter of the 30th ult., transmitting a copy of your work on Steam Tactics.

"(Signed) B. OSBORNE.

"Mr. George Biddlecombe."

"WINDSOR CASTLE, *December 26th*, 1857.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have had the honour to lay before his Royal Highness the Prince Consort, your letter of the 23rd instant, together with the work which accompanied it, and which I have, by his Royal Highness's permission, presented to Prince Alfred. The young Prince directs me to return you his best thanks for your attention.

"Yours truly,

"C. B. PHIPPS.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

The necessity for the work was vouched for by the fact of the great number of experienced naval officers who applied for it before publication. Prince Adalbert wrote to me of the book as follows:—

"BERLIN, *February 21st*, 1858.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and assuring you that your kindness in sending me a copy of your

most interesting work has been gratifying to me. I should have been able to thank you in person, but my time was so much taken up while in England, that I could not spare any to run down to Plymouth, failing in which I beg leave to express my sincere thanks in these lines.

"ADALBERT, PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq."

When Sir James Plumridge, on his promotion to Vice-Admiral, left Devonport and Keyham Yards, he wrote me the following note :—

"HOPTON HALL, 28*th December*, 1857.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"Pray write out any certificate you wish me to sign for you. I feel convinced that I cannot pen one to come up to the good and sincere opinion I have always entertained of you and your services since we first met in the Baltic, and up to the time of our departure from each other at Keyham.

"I am, my dear Biddlecombe,

"Yours faithfully,

"J. HANWAY PLUMRIDGE."

The Council of the Royal United Service Institution requested me to lecture on the subject of my

work, "Naval Tactics," a copy of which I had presented to them; but I thought it might be more beneficial to the Service to read another lecture which I entitled "Practical Remarks on a Few Points relative to Steam Vessels." Of this the Council approved, but I was unable to be in London at the time fixed (March 28th, 1858), and it was read for me by Captain Nolloth, R.N., and a vote of thanks accorded to me.

In May, 1858, when her Majesty the Queen of the French, accompanied by the Duchess of Orleans, Prince de Joinville, and the Duc d'Aumale, went over the U.S. frigate *Niagara*, then at Keyham shipping the Atlantic Telegraph Cable, I had the honour to receive the party and take them over the ship and the establishment. On their return to Claremont I received the following letter, and with it a book on French "Naval Tactics":—

"CLAREMONT, *May 2nd*, 1858.

"SIR,

"You will find enclosed a little book, which I beg you to accept, and which contains an Essay on 'Tactics' for our Steam Fleet. You are more than any other able to judge of its merits.

"In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank you once more for the obliging manner with which

you received us at Keyham, and desire you to believe in my sentiments of high esteem.

"FR. D'ORLEANS,
"Prince de Joinville.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,
"Keyham."

At a later date, when the Count de Paris and Duke of Wurtemberg visited Keyham, it was gratifying to learn from the former that I had not been forgotten. "Mr. Biddlecombe," he said, "my uncles, the Prince de Joinville and Duc d'Aumale, desired to be kindly remembered to you."

In June, 1858, during a trip to France, I received much kindness from Admiral Penaud, who was in the Baltic in 1854. He expressed his regret that the Legion of Honour had not been awarded me for my services to his flagship. He obtained me an order for a special visit to the Tuileries; and whilst I was at Cherbourg in August, when the docks were opened by the Emperor, he sent me an introduction to Captain de Silva, commanding the Emperor's yacht, who kindly entertained me, took me over the Dockyard, and placed me so that I could see the sluice removed in the presence of the Emperor and Empress. Our Queen and Prince Albert were at Cherbourg in the *Victoria and Albert*, attended by a squadron under Lord Lyons.

The anchorage was crowded with English yachts, and the town so full it was difficult to obtain anything to eat. The illuminations both ashore and afloat could hardly be surpassed.

In September Prince Adalbert came to Devonport—this time in his yacht the *Grille*. He invited me to luncheon on board, where I met the Governor, Admiral, and other officers; and H.R. Highness then thanked me for following his suggestion in publishing my work on Steam Fleet Tactics. On his return to Berlin he sent me his portrait and the following letter:—

"BERLIN, 15*th November*, 1858.

"DEAR SIR,

"As a small token of my regard and acknowledgment of the kindness and courtesy shown to me, I send my portrait to you.

"At the same time, making use of the opportunity to assure you of my good wishes, and of my always taking an interest in your proceedings,

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"ADALBERT,

"Prince of Prussia.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,

"Assist. Master Attendant,

"Devonport."

On the 8th October, 1859, I made a trip in the steamship *Great Eastern* from Weymouth to Holyhead. From the latter place I crossed to Liverpool to visit my friend Mr. John Clint, who had had much to do with the *Conway* training-ship. I went on board that vessel to see the working, and presented two of my published works to the library. On account of the interest I had taken in the *Conway* and *Indefatigable*, I received several invitations from the Mayors of Liverpool to their banquets, but had never been present on account of the distance. On the present occasion my small gift was thus acknowledged :—

"MERCANTILE MARINE SERVICE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT, SCHOOL FRIGATE 'CONWAY,'
"22*nd October*, 1859.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am desired by the Committee of the School Frigate *Conway* to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, accompanied with the two valuable works on naval tactics of which you are the author, and which will form so suitable and useful an addition to the ship's library. The Committee desire also to thank you for the very flattering terms in which you speak of the *Conway* as an institution, coming as it does from one so well able to form an opinion

as to the sufficiency of the education given, and its adaptability for the purpose intended.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"JAMES BEAZLEY,

"Chairman.

"George Biddlecombe, Esq.,

"Keyham."

On the 22nd February, 1860, I was promoted to the rank of Commander, R.N.

In September of that year, the Grand Duke Michael of Russia, and the Grand Duchess, visited Keyham. In the Superintendent's absence on leave I received them and took them over the establishment. In conversation his Royal Highness spoke of the success of our fleet in the navigation of the Baltic in 1854, and especially of the passage of the Baro Sound by the allied fleet without accident; for, as he said, the Russians themselves lost vessels in these seas. When he learned that I had the original MS. of my survey of Baro Sound, he wished to see it; and when I gave it him, observed that my name as Master of the Fleet was familiar to him, and that his father, the Emperor Nicholas, had often highly praised our navigation of the Baltic. I was asked into their carriage to accompany them through the

tunnel to Devonport Yard. It was the first carriage to pass through the tunnel.

The Admiralty having determined to appoint a Committee to revise the rigging warrants and establishments of stores of H.M. vessels, I was appointed one of three members for this service. On the 29th July, 1862, at the opening of the Merchant Seaman's Orphan Asylum, Snaresbrook, I was introduced to Earl Russell, the President, who, on learning I had been shipmate of his two brothers, Lords Edward and Henry, and of his brother-in-law, the Hon. J. B. Elliot, was marked in his attention to me.

During a tour in Cornwall as far as the Land's End, I was extremely gratified to hear of the promotion of my nephew, Thomas Edward Biddlecombe, to the rank of Master, R.N., and on my return home I wrote to thank Admiral Eden, who replied to me as follows:

"ADMIRALTY, *October 10th*, 1862.

"DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I am glad you are pleased at your nephew's promotion. He had no one to thank for it but himself. His service was honest and straightforward, and that being the case, it was not likely I should pass him over.

"Yours very truly,

"CHARLES EDEN."

My nephew arrived home after five years on the Australian station, in H.M.S. *Pelorus*, Captain F. B. Seymour, on the 27th November following. He came to my house dreadfully emaciated, but soon recovered under careful attention.

I received the following certificate from Sir Thomas Pasley, Bart., on his promotion and resignation of the appointment of Admiral Superintendent, when he was succeeded by Rear-Admiral Thomas C. Symonds, C.B.

"H.M. DOCKYARD, DEVONPORT,
"*November 24th*, 1862.

"During the five years of my superintendence of this establishment, Commander Biddlecombe has been Assistant Master Attendant at Keyham, where he has performed his duties with great zeal and ability. His conduct in charge of the yard during my absence has always met my approbation; and I can strongly recommend him for promotion as a most efficient officer.

"(Signed) THOMAS S. PASLEY,
"Rear-Admiral Superintendent."

On the 26th January, 1863, whilst removing H.M.S. *Buzzard* from the Basin at Keyham, the bow hawser tripped me up. I fell backwards, striking the left side of my head, left arm and knee, and was so severely shaken as to be taken

up scarcely sensible. In spite of the attention of the medical officers at Keyham, no improvement took place up to March 3rd, when I went to Clifton to consult Dr. Symonds, and by his advice moved about in Dorsetshire until the 27th June, when I was able to return to my duties. I then completed the sixth edition of my little book "Remarks on the English Channel." The Corporation of Trinity House marked their approval of it by taking fifty copies; and from Prince Leiningen, commanding the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, I received the following kind note:

"COWES, *3rd May*, 1863.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"Very many thanks for your kind letter and your book 'Remarks on the English Channel.' I only wish all the valuable information therein contained actually had found a place inside my own head. You see I have got back to the old ship again, and I hope I may some day have a chance of paying you a visit at Plymouth in her.

"Believe me,

"Very sincerely yours,

"LEININGEN."

In September, whilst at Portsmouth with my nephew, who had been appointed Master of

H.M.S. *Falcon*, he accompanied me to visit the last resting-place of my old and sincere friend Admiral Sir Charles Napier, at Catherington, Hants. The grave, overhung with trees, lies in a very secluded spot in the corner of the village churchyard. Shortly afterwards H.M.S. *Falcon* called into Plymouth on her way to the Australian station, for which she sailed on November 11th, and my wife and I had thus the chance to take leave of my nephew. On November 4th I took charge of H.M.S. *Black Prince*, the largest vessel in the navy, from Hamoaze into Plymouth Sound, and was glad to find that I got through a time so anxious without any ill effects, as it seemed to prove that my health was fully re-established.

On my birthday in the following year (November 5th, 1864) I received the appointment of Master Attendant of Woolwich Dockyard, the highest appointment in the service for our class of officers. The day of our leaving Keyham in December, 1864, was a melancholy one; for not only was it hard to leave a neighbourhood in which we had taken so deep an interest, but my wife was and had been for some time seriously ill, and it was not easy to remove her to Woolwich. I had whilst at Keyham become connected with several of the public institutions. Amongst others, I had been member of a Committee at Devonport for prelimi-

nary examinations for the Society of Arts; and also of a Committee, formed at the instance of the Rev. Æneas B. Hutchinson, Incumbent of St. James, Keyham, to build schools for the poor boys and girls of the parish, which were opened on June 9th, 1863, much to Mr. Hutchinson's delight. In connection with the schools we formed a Literary Society, of which I was elected Vice-President; and in acknowledgment of my services to it, was presented at a special meeting of the parishioners of Keyham, on September 29th, 1864, with photographs of the President and Committee, inscribed as under :—

"Presented to Captain George Biddlecombe, R.N., on the 29th September, 1864, by the circumscribing and other members of the St. James' Literary Society, Keyham; as a slight remembrance of the assistance rendered by him to the Society in the capacity of Vice-President."

On our leaving, the schoolmaster and mistresses with the school children presented me with an address; and all of them, headed by our esteemed friend Mr. Hutchinson, lined the road through which we had to pass from my residence. Shortly after our arrival at Woolwich, we had this letter from Mr. Hutchinson :

"St. James, Keyham, Devonport,
"*7th December*, 1864.

"My dear Biddlecombe,

"I am delighted to hear that Mrs. Biddlecombe got over the very fatiguing journey so well, and hope, after a few days' rest, she will not feel any of the consequences after long travel. I am sure we shall increasingly miss you, in your very useful *non*-professional services here, and shall (as my good mother says) find it very difficult to supply your place in our parochial works. I shall always reflect with pleasure on the period of your connection with us here. With renewed thanks for your lengthened cordial and valued co-operation, and the many proofs you have given me of your regard and sympathy, I am glad you were not displeased at the parting demonstration on the part of the children. Though I ordered the yards to be manned as a mark of respect; yet you must not intrepret the *cheers* fully to represent our feelings on the occasion. Whilst expressive of our wishes for your health and prosperity, they were intended as tokens of our loss; believe me to be, with very kind regards to Mrs. Biddlecombe,

"Yours most sincerely,

"Æneas B. Hutchinson.

"To Captain Biddlecombe, R.N."

My good friend Mr. Hutchinson died in 1866 from overwork.

Admiral Sir Thomas Pasley, on hearing of my appointment to Woolwich, addressed me a cordial note:

"THE CRAIG, WINDERMERE,
"*November 12th*, 1864.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I congratulate you very sincerely on your promotion, which I am very glad has come *at last*. It has been a long time coming, and I wish for your sake it had not been so long about it; but since it has come, I will only say, better late than never.

"Believe me, yours truly,
"THOMAS SABINE PASLEY."

On our first settling at Woolwich my wife's health materially improved—insomuch so, that on one occasion she was able to go out for a drive. But a few weeks afterwards she became gradually worse, and, after great and lingering suffering, died at 7 A.M. on the 13th of August, in the confident hope of the life everlasting. A kinder woman never breathed; and she bore the sufferings of many years with unwearying fortitude and resignation. Her remains I was able to attend to their last resting-place, the churchyard of the church

where we were married—Kingston, Corfe Castle, Dorsetshire, near her own friends.

In the course of my duties at Woolwich, I had to receive many royal personages. On the 27th of June, 1865, I attended the Queen of the Netherlands on her disembarkation, and was presented by the Minister; on the 27th of July I superintended her Majesty's departure. In August I was present at the embarkation of her Majesty Queen Victoria and the Royal Family for the Continent, and at Gravesend, at that of H.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales. On the 11th of September, I boarded the royal yacht *Osborne*, to place her alongside the Arsenal Wharf for the landing of their Royal Highnesses. On being presented, the Prince of Wales was good enough to allude to my having been Master of the *Victoria and Albert* on the Queen's first visit to Ireland in 1849. The Prince then presented me to the Princess Louis of Hesse, who very kindly had her two children brought for me to see; nor did she allow me to retire without referring to the fact of our having been old shipmates. On the 28th of October, on the arrival at Gravesend of the *Osborne* with the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, I attended; and on being presented to the Prince was requested by him to accompany H.R. Highness to the saloon to be presented to the Crown Princess. She at once

recognised me as having served on board the royal yacht, and desired me to walk near to her up the pier to the carriage; and she called to mind, in referring to the rough passage from Ireland to Scotland, the fact of Prince Alfred having been washed into the lee-gangway, and that I had assisted to get him out of the water.

On October 13, 1865, I submitted a plan to the Admiralty for a slipping deadeye for use in rigging requiring to be quickly moved out of the line of fire. It was approved by the Controller and fitted to some of H.M. ships. On the 29th of December the Commodore and myself dined with the Japanese Commissioners at the Langham Hotel. At the banquet were many persons of distinction. The builders of H.M.S. *Northumberland* having failed to launch her, I was ordered by the Admiralty to give my assistance; and on the anniversary of my first going to sea, the 17th of April, 1866, we got her afloat. On the occasion I took H.R.H. Prince Arthur to Millwall to witness the launch.

On July 3, 1866, I was married at St. Stephen's Church, Canonbury, by the incumbent, the Rev. W. Ward, to Emma Sarah, daughter of William and Sarah Middleton of Stand House, Endcliffe, near Sheffield.

On our return to Devonport, after tours through

Cumberland, and Devon and Cornwall, I was much grieved to hear of the death of Mr. Hutchinson, already named. I also heard in the ensuing year of the decease of my nephew Thomas, Master of H.M.S. *Falcon*, who had died at Norfolk Island on the 19th of January, 1867. The information came in a letter from Mr. Adams, a descendant of one of the mutineers of the *Bounty*. My nephew's service in the Crimean war, in which, in H.M.S. *Sanspareil*, he had taken part in the attack on Sebastopol, and in the *Agamemnon* to the close of the operations; and again in the New Zealand war, in H.M.S. *Pelorus*, had affected his health, and he had been invalided and sent to Norfolk Island. The officers of the *Falcon* subscribed for a monument to his memory; but ultimately the Government of New South Wales satisfactorily erected a memorial over his grave, as a mark of their appreciation of his services.

On the 13th of March, 1867, her Majesty was pleased to confer upon me the Military Order of the Bath. On the occasion I received many letters from naval officers and private friends; amongst them the following.

"*March 15th*, 1867.

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN BIDDLECOMBE,

"The man lives not more capable of a more hearty feeling of rejoicing in the tardy recog-

nition of your well-earned claim to the distinction of the Military Order of the Bath.

"I am your sincere friend,

"J. EDWARD WALCOTT.

"Commander Biddlecombe, C.B.,

"Woolwich."

"28, ST. JAMES'S PLACE, LONDON,
"*March 16th*, 1867.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"Pray let me be among the first to congratulate you on having at length got what you ought to have had long ago for Acre and the Baltic. No one in our service is more delighted at seeing your name among the C.B.'s than your old messmate,—

"F. BEAUCHAMP SEYMOUR."

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE,
"*22nd March*, 1867.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I offer you my sincere congratulations upon the Companionship of the Bath having been conferred upon you; and I am truly glad in doing so to be enabled to congratulate you upon your escape from what might have been a most serious accident." (I had had a severe fall whilst inspecting H.M.S. *Nymphe*.) "The reward of the Bath, coming at any time, is always a matter of great

satisfaction, and in your own case I am sure that the delay will, in the eyes of your friends, in no way affect their reflections as to your having well earned it. Hoping that we may soon meet,

"Believe me yours very truly,

"J. O. COWELL."

(Sir John Cowell was with me when reconnoitring Sweaborg in 1854.)

On the occasion of the illness of the Princess of Wales, I attended their Royal Highnesses when they embarked for the Continent, and on their return, and was personally thanked by the Prince for my attention. On the 1st of July, 1867, I was promoted to Staff-Captain, and in the autumn following made a tour of South Wales. Shortly after my return to Woolwich I determined to retire from the service; and, on the occasion of my retirement, was gratified by receiving the following note from the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty:—

"From my first acquaintance with you in 1847, I have always had much regard for you—a most highly efficient and valuable public servant—and you will leave the Yard with the respect of every one with whom you have served, and with none more than myself. You will always have my best wishes for your future prosperity."

CHAPTER XXI.

RETIRED AS CAPTAIN R.N.; RECEIVED THE HONOUR OF KNIGHTHOOD, AND AWARDED A GREENWICH PENSION, 1867-78.

Application for pension—Elected to committee Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum—Elected member of the council of the Royal Naval School—St. Paul's on Thanksgiving Day—Publish pamphlet on "Changes in the Royal Navy"—I am knighted at Windsor—Mr. Gladstone—Congratulatory letters—Propose a star pier at Calais—Awarded a Greenwich pension—Elected to the committee of the Royal Naval Female School—Mont Cenis tunnel—Inspect the lighthouse at Swanage on the site I had suggested—The Prince of Wales—Mr. and Mrs. Brassey—Interview with Mrs. Girling—Trip to the Continent, Mediterranean, and Egypt—At Palermo again—The Suez Canal—Received by the Khedive—Revisiting old scenes: Scio, Smyrna, Corfu—Home again—Conclusion.

ON retiring from Woolwich I applied to the Admiralty for a pension, and my application was supported by Admirals Sir Michael Seymour, Sir Thomas M. C. Symonds, Sir Ducie Chads, and Sir Robert Smart, with all of whom I had served.

I finally left Woolwich Dockyard in January, 1868, and took up my residence in Granville Park, Blackheath. Unfortunately, the small-pox,

contracted no doubt at Woolwich, laid me up for some time; and, on recovering from it, and on going to Dorsetshire, I took a chill whilst waiting at a railway-station in the July following, from which a fever resulted, and for days my life was despaired of. When my health was, I am thankful to say, fully restored, I received many invitations from public bodies in London (amongst them from the Merchant Taylors' Company to meet H.M. Ministers) as a compliment on my retirement. In 1869 I attended the first levee held by her Majesty since the death of the Prince Consort.

On the 3rd of February, 1870, I was unanimously elected to the Committee of Management of the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum, in which, for many years, I had taken much interest. In 1869 we made a tour of North and South Devon, and of Yorkshire; and in May, 1870, started for the Continent, staying at Paris, Baden-Baden, Frankfort, and other places of interest, and, coming down the Rhine, visited the field of Waterloo on the 18th of June, the anniversary of the famous victory, and on our return spent the autumn in pleasant trips to Warwickshire and Yorkshire.

On the 26th of October, 1870, I was unanimously elected a member of the Council of the Royal

Naval School. On the 21st of June of the following year we received a special invitation to a dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern for the Home for Little Boys, at which the chair was taken by the Prince of Wales. My wife was unable to attend, but I went, and met, amongst the rest of the distinguished company, which included the Duchess of Sutherland and many ladies, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, who spoke of our delightful cruise to Gibraltar. The Prince of Wales also was extremely kind in his notice of me. The summer and autumn of this year we spent in various parts of England, visiting, amongst others, my old shipmate, Captain Mainprise, at Fareham, Hants, where we met my old friend General Sir Percy Douglas. Shortly after our return, I attended the funeral of Sir John Burgoyne, in the Chapel of the Tower of London. During the impressive service, at which the Duke of Cambridge was present amidst a large concourse of military and naval officers, I was seated near the coffin. The occasion was the more interesting to me on account of the recent loss of the son in the ill-fated *Captain*, for I had known Captain Burgoyne from the time he joined the navy.

On the memorable Thanksgiving Day, the 27th

of February, 1872, the Lord Chamberlain sent me two tickets for the West Gallery of St. Paul's, which were made use of by my wife and a friend; whilst, in compliance with an official card, I attended in uniform with the other naval officers. My seat was close to the raised dais, and I had an admirable view of the whole procession by which the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Royal Family were conducted to and from the royal dais. In the evening I was, by invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Goschen, at an entertainment at the Admiralty, honoured by the presence of the Duke of Edinburgh.

In this year I published a small pamphlet for private circulation entitled "Changes in the Royal Navy during the Last Half-century." It was very well received. In the autumn, during a most enjoyable tour in Scotland, we visited my old captain, Sir Alexander, and his wife, Lady Milne, at Inveresk; and in January of the following year, I went to Chislehurst to view the lying-in-state of the Emperor Napoleon. I thought the appearance very lifelike. In May I received the following autograph note (only a few weeks before his decease) from Prince Adalbert, in return for some sketches and papers on nautical subjects sent to him:—

"BERLIN, 15*th May*, 1873.

"DEAR SIR,

"My best thanks for your kind letter I received at London, and the papers and sketches you had the kindness in sending to Berlin.

"Yours sincerely,

"ADALBERT, Prince of Prussia.

"Captain George Biddlecombe, R.N., C.B."

On the 24th of May, 1873, I was informed that her Majesty had been pleased to approve of the Order of Knighthood being conferred on me, and I was requested to say whether I wished to receive it from her Majesty or by letters patent. I elected to receive it from the Queen, and therefore had to await her Majesty's return from Scotland. Being informed that Thursday, the 26th of June, was the date fixed, I proceeded on that day to Windsor in the train conveying H.M. Ministers; and, on my arrival, accompanied Sir Arthur Helps, Clerk of the Council, in one of the royal carriages to the Castle, where we had luncheon with the Lords-in-waiting, during which time the Ambassadors were being presented and a council held. At the conclusion of the council, the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Sydney) having first kindly explained to me the form of the ceremony, I was ushered into the royal presence in the royal

closet by the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State. Kneeling before the Queen, behind whom were the Ladies-in-waiting, on my right knee, I received from her Majesty the honour of knighthood.

On reaching the corridor I found several of the Ministers, and amongst them Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, who at once tendered me his congratulations, and requested me to accompany him to London, where, on our arrival at Paddington, he took leave of me, as also did Sir Arthur Helps, who, on shaking hands, tendered me his sincere congratulations. On the announcement appearing in the *Gazette*, I received a large number of congratulatory letters from officers of all ranks of the service, as well as from private friends. From these I select five; and in reference to them should perhaps explain that Admiral Dunlop was the Commodore at Woolwich Yard during my tenure of office there; Captain Pearn, an old brother officer of distinction who served at the capture of Sidon and Acre; Admiral Anson, twice shipmate with me; Captain Allen, a brother officer in the Baltic in 1854; and, lastly, Mr. McTernan, who had retired from Greenwich Hospital as Deputy-Inspector, was, it will doubtless be remembered, the superintendent of the convicts on the ship *Ocean*, and one whom I had often met

during our careers, and always with extreme pleasure :—

"LONDON, *27th June*, 1873.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I have just read in the *Times* an account of the honour conferred on you by her Majesty, and I wish to be one of the first to express my congratulations and kind wishes to you and Lady Biddlecombe. Your long and meritorious career in the Naval Service well entitles you to the distinction the Queen has bestowed on you, and I hope you may have many years of life and health in which to enjoy it. Mrs. Dunlop begs me to add her congratulations to my own, and we unite in very kind regards to you and Lady Biddlecombe.

"Believe me, my dear Biddlecombe,

"Very truly yours,

"HUGH DUNLOP."

"ERITH, *28th June*, 1873.

"MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,

"I pray thee accept my sincere congratulations on the honour a beloved Queen has just conferred upon you. Pray convey to her ladyship my respects, wishing you both health and

long life to enjoy your titles. Excuse this short epistle; my eye is painful.

"Yours very sincerely,

"E. J. P. PEARN."

"*2nd July*, 1873.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"You must have a line of congratulation on your *well*-deserved honour. I was glad to see my old shipmate's name in the papers, having been so noticed by our beloved Queen.

"Long may you live to enjoy it. We have known each other a long time, and can go back many years.

"Always your old friend and well-wisher,

"J. V. ANSON."

"OLD CHARLTON, *28th June*, 1873.

"MY DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"I was very pleased yesterday to read in the *Court Circular* that the Queen at Windsor had conferred upon you the honour of knighthood. I hope all our brother officers will feel as gratified as I do. My wife joins me in kind congratulations to yourself and Lady Biddlecombe.

"Yours very sincerely,

"ROBERT E. ALLEN."

"*30th June*, 1873.

"DEAR BIDDLECOMBE,

"Yesterday Captain Mends communicated to me that you had been awarded a well-earned distinction. I beg to congratulate you, and say how rejoiced we shall be to shake hands with Lady Biddlecombe and you.

"Faithfully yours,

"J. MCTERNAN."

In the early part of 1874 I proposed a star pier, to be constructed off Calais, in a depth of twenty-two feet low-water spring-tides; the particulars of which, with a diagram, were published in *Engineering*. It received the approval of Colonel Sir Andrew Clarke, R.E.

On the 29th of May, 1874, the Board of Admiralty, under the Right Honourable G. Ward Hunt, awarded me a Greenwich Hospital Pension, and on the 28th of January of the following year, I was unanimously elected to the Committee of the Royal Naval Female School at Isleworth.

Our trip in the summer of this year (1875) took us to Clifton and back through Devonport, when we were present at St. James's Schools, Keyham, at the distribution of prizes; and I had much pleasure in witnessing the success of the schools, and in meeting many old friends. Later we went

to Yorkshire, and were at Sheffield during the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales. In 1876 we had a delightful trip to the Continent, visiting, amongst other places, the Italian lakes, Milan, and Turin; at which latter place it was so intensely hot that, on a visit to the Basilica of La Superga, the royal burial-place, our horses were unable to proceed, and we had to walk part of the way. The mausoleum is very interesting, and commands extensive views. On leaving and reaching Mont Cenis, the change of climate from the intense heat at Turin, to the refreshing coolness when nearing the patches of snow lying at the entrance to the tunnel, was not more delightful than it was remarkable; but on descending again the temperature changed, and when Lyons was reached, it was so close as to be almost unbearable.

I was anxious to inspect the site selected by the Corporation of Trinity House, at Swanage, Dorsetshire, for the lighthouse, which, it may be remembered, I recommended twenty years before. At the time my opinion had been given from a *sea* view only, and I wished to see the spot on shore. I accordingly went there, and was much satisfied with what had been done; and particularly to find that the exact position I had named had been ultimately fixed upon. I have no doubt the light will be most useful to navigators of the English

Channel, especially to vessels entering the Needles passage to Southampton. Whilst staying here I was on one occasion leading my horse along a footway, when, instead of walking over it, he jumped and pitched upon my right shoulder, knocking me down. Fortunately I had a thick hat on, which broke the weight of his fall. Nevertheless, my head was considerably affected, and it was with difficulty I managed to remount and get home and to bed.

On the 5th March, 1877, at a dinner for the benefit of the Orphan Working School, the Prince of Wales was most gracious to me, conversing with me during the evening on naval topics. On the 12th of that month I attended her Majesty's levee; and a little later was present at the Jubilee Festival of the Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum, when Lord Northbrook presided, and the Lord Mayor attended in state. It was very successful; the contributions exceeding £8,000.

On the 22nd June Mr. Brassey, M.P., who with Mrs. Brassey had just returned from their trip round the world in the *Sunbeam*, invited me to accompany them to H.M.S. *Worcester*, at Greenhithe, when he presented the prizes to the cadets. I was much struck with his practical language to the youngsters, whose pleasure was much enhanced when Mrs. Brassey proceeded to place the

medals on the breasts of the successful. My own interest was increased by the fact that when the *Conway* had been established in the Mersey for a similar purpose, I had given some assistance to the promoters.

In July, 1877, whilst staying with Mr. John Kemp Welch, at Sopley Park, we had the opportunity of visiting the camp of the Shakers, some eight miles distant. We conversed with Mrs. Gurling and several of her followers. But if we hoped to learn something of the object of their mission, we were disappointed. All we could gather was that they lived for their own benefit, and in a state of celibacy. When I heard the latter, I put the question to Mrs. Gurling and to three of the men: "Have you considered what would be the result in a certain time if the whole population adopted your views?" I could obtain nothing, however, but evasive and absurd remarks in reply. They were eighty-two in number, principally young men, girls, and children. They appeared to be cleanly and orderly, but in a state of pauperism.

On the 16th of January, 1878, I started for Calais, and there met Mr. Stanley Kemp Welch, with whom I was about to make a tour. On the following day we heard the High Mass at the Madeleine for the late Victor Emmanuel, and afterwards went

over the Trocadéro. On our way to Marseilles we stayed at Avignon, where I was much interested, and viewed with absolute horror the dungeon in which the Duc d'Enghien was confined for two years and a half—a dreadful place. From Marseilles, after a stay of ten days, we proceeded in an Italian vessel, the *Segasta*, to Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, and Palermo, going on shore at each place. Although the landing-place at Genoa was very filthy, I was much interested by our visit there. The monument of Christopher Columbus is something beautiful. The weather was very cold, the snow lying deep on all the mountains, and when Naples was reached, the smoke from Mount Vesuvius, beaten down by a north-east gale, was not distinguishable from the snow-covered mountain side. At Palermo we visited the observatory where in 1841 I had made observations to determine the longitude of Keith's Reefs. When the Astronomer-Royal, Cacaetore, who had been with his father in 1841, heard of my arrival, he, although very unwell, determined to receive me, and we met with great pleasure after so many years. I took the opportunity here to revisit my favourite chapel, and we also inspected the Byzantine church at Mon-Realle, esteemed, as to its construction, the most splendid church in Christendom.

From Palermo we proceeded in the steamer

Florence to various ports in Sicily and on to Malta. On this occasion our view of the Faro of Messina was not so good as I had been accustomed to look for, the Calabrian Mountains being enveloped in fog. When we landed at Messina, which city is immensely improved since I last knew it, the effect of the sun rising over the Calabrian Mountains, reflected on the snow-covered Ætna, was to be wondered at, but certainly not to be described. At Malta, where we arrived on the 4th of February, I went over H.M.S. *Devastation*, Captain Grabbe, lunched with Admiral Rice, and visited, as I desired to do, the church built by Queen Adelaide, which is well worthy of her Majesty's intention. The cold weather determined us to make for Egypt, and on the 9th February we sailed in the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Nizam*, having on board a most agreeable party of passengers from England, for Port Said, which we reached on the 13th. Our speed through the canal was five knots, making fast to the side of the canal at night, with nothing to be seen but miles of sand. The size of the dredges in the canal quite astonished me. Stopping the night at Suez, we started next morning by rail for Cairo in a miserable first-class carriage, but on a day so cold, that on passing through Ismaila we would not get out. On the Sunday we walked out to see the carriages drive

out with the harems; and amongst them was that of the Khedive in a brougham and pair, the ladies well dressed, with yashmacs, a eunuch on the box with the coachman, two running footmen, and four outriders with drawn swords. During our stay in Cairo we visited most of the places of interest. Whilst lunching one day in the hotel, McKillop Pacha, an Admiral in the Egyptian Navy, whom I had slightly known in England, called on a friend, and hearing of my arrival, volunteered to introduce me to the Khedive.

On arrival at the palace, we were ushered into the chamberlain's apartments and had coffee; and afterwards were directed to proceed up the grand staircase, which was lined with troops and high officers. At the top the Khedive appeared with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and on my name being announced, shook my hand and requested me, with McKillop Pacha, to accompany him to an inner chamber, which gained, he bid me sit on a sofa beside him, whilst McKillop Pacha sat in a chair and interpreted to him in French. The Khedive, who is very stout and short but very quick of perception, wore a plain overcoat with an embroidered undercoat and some orders. He was very kind in his manner, and when I told him that I had often been round the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, and now had come to see the Suez

Canal, he inquired my age, and expressed himself astonished. He shook hands again on parting. Some days after I was invited to a déjeuner at the palace, when his Highness was again extremely polite to me.

After visiting the Pyramids and Sphinx, we started from Cairo on February 24th, for Alexandria, which we left on the 26th in the Austrian Lloyd's steamer *Aurora* for Scio and Smyrna, Morice Pacha sending boats to embark us with our luggage. Alexandria is very extensive, with good wide streets, but the shoal water is a very serious drawback to its magnificent harbour. It was a great pleasure to revisit Scio again, and to find that not only had the town extended since 1839, but that the island was evidently steadily improving. Smyrna, too, had largely increased, and whilst we were there, was in a state of excitement because of the arrival of two thousand sick and wounded soldiers from Constantinople—wretched objects they were. As they landed, numbers were at once embarked in small boats to go direct to their homes—generally utterly destitute. We left Smyrna on the 2nd March, and visited many places with which I had been familiar during the time I was in the *Talbot*. We first went to Scio again, and from Scio to Syra, and from this place to Athens (which is immensely improved, and

where we were hospitably received by Mr. Wyndham, the chargé d'affaires), visiting all the places of interest, ancient and modern, and on to Corinth, Patras, Zante, Argostoli, and to Corfu, where we anchored on the 11th of March. At Corfu, the Consul-General asked me to go with him in H.M.S. *Rapid* for a cruise on the Albanian coast. We went to Butrinto and on to Sta. Quaranta, where the Consul-General and Captain Fitzgerald landed to obtain some information. We learned that some Greek insurgents from Corfu had been surrounded by the Turks, when they had thrown away their arms, some of them swimming off to a passing Austrian vessel. A few days previously H.M.S. *Rapid* had brought to Corfu one hundred and fifty Albanian women and children, rendered homeless by the burning of their villages. On the 14th of March, we left Corfu for Brindisi, and from Brindisi sailed for Ancona, where we anchored on the 17th. From Ancona we took the rail to Bologna, and after visiting Venice and Verona, proceeded to Munich. But although these visits were a source of great pleasure to myself, I would not presume to offer any description of places so generally known. From Munich we came through Frankfort and Rotterdam home, concluding in seventy-four days a tour of the greatest interest.

And now, as I have completed my threescore years and ten, I can hardly look that the remainder of my days will afford incident worthy of record in writing; and I feel confident that I do not vainly, in conclusion, express the hope that the reminiscences of a sailor's life, as here briefly given, will be judged with some indulgence by the critical reader.

THE END.

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